

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

February 7, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair, Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20215

Dear Chair Westerman:

According to your Majority's draft authorization and oversight plan for the 119th Congress, "Congress is responsible for keeping the government accountable to the American people, ensuring decisions by agencies are open and transparent and the effective stewardship of taxpayers' money." Indeed, pursuant to clause 2 of Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Natural Resources Committee shall have general oversight over "the organization and operation of Federal agencies and entities having responsibility for the administration and execution of laws and programs addressing subjects within its jurisdiction."

I strongly urge you to exercise this oversight authority to work with me to thoroughly investigate the illegal actions taken by Elon Musk and Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) personnel to intimidate National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) employees, reportedly threatening mass layoffs of 50 percent of the workforce and 30 percent of the budget.

There have been credible reports of DOGE personnel disregarding security checkpoints, rifling through personal belongings, demanding access to computers, emails, and other sensitive information, and adding employees' names to lists on their clipboards if they are perceived to have resisted.

Over the past decade, President Trump, his MAGA cheerleaders inside Congress, and their oil and gas-funded allies have stoked fear and conspiracy theories about NOAA's workforce and the agency's science, laying the groundwork for the DOGE harassment we are witnessing this week.

NOAA provides cutting-edge research and services to keep American families safe and bolsters a sustainable blue economy, services that Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle – including within the Natural Resources Committee – support through annual appropriations requests and diligent reauthorizations of NOAA programs. We all have constituents in our districts who will suffer if NOAA's work is halted.

I call on you to use this Committee's investigative power to obtain documents and answers from the Trump administration sufficient to provide answers to the American people about the following questions:

1. What authorities are Elon Musk and DOGE personnel using to gain access to NOAA facilities and systems?

2. Are Musk's DOGE personnel removing data from NOAA systems? If so, what data are they taking, and what are they doing with it?
3. How are Musk's DOGE personnel ensuring compliance with data privacy, classification, and other laws protecting sensitive or classified information? Do all those with access to classified data have the appropriate security clearance?
4. Many Trump administration allies have discussed plans to dismantle NOAA, and NOAA employees have reportedly been told to expect a reduction in staff by 50 percent. What is the timeline for such action, how does the Administration plan to notify staff, how much warning will staff receive, and what are the plans for carrying out NOAA's critical science and safety functions if such dismantling occurs?
5. What authorities does the Trump administration plan to use to carry out reductions in force?
6. What authorities does the Trump administration plan to use to dismantle NOAA?
7. How will the Trump administration ensure that the functions NOAA performs pursuant to law will continue to be executed?
8. Many communities nationwide rely on the services NOAA provides, including the National Weather Service, fishery management activities, and providing real-time information on coastal hazards. How does the Trump administration plan to minimize disruptions to the products and services these communities rely upon?
9. What steps have been taken to address any conflicts of interest between Elon Musk's companies, including SpaceX and Starlink, and the mission and activities of NOAA?

I look forward to your prompt action on this request and encourage your staff to contact the Democratic oversight staff of the Natural Resources Committee to coordinate such an investigation.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources