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BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES
AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST
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February 13, 2025

The Honorable Jennifer Quinones
Deputy Inspector General
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Inspector General
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20024

RE: Guarding Against Unauthorized Incursions into Restricted Data and Conflicts of Interest at the Department of Energy

Dear Deputy Inspector General Quinones:

We write to express deep concern with the illegal shutdown of certain operations of the Department of Energy (DOE) and the unauthorized incursions of Elon Musk and his associates into sensitive information at DOE.

This week, a federal district court ordered the Administration, including DOE, to “immediately end any federal funding pause” and noted that the broad categorical and sweeping freeze of federal funds is “likely unconstitutional and has caused and continues to cause irreparable harm to a vast portion of this country.” The court explicitly directed the Administration to continue funding disbursement of grants, loans and other partnership assistance to states, local communities and nonprofit agencies initiatives under the landmark *Inflation Reduction Act* and *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*.

Many of the IRA and Infrastructure Law initiatives are key to putting money back into the pockets of hardworking Americans such as energy efficiency and weatherization of homes. Many other grants and loans are big cost savers as well for consumer electric bills. Plus, a whole host of grants and loans are intended to reduce pollution at a critical time when many communities are suffering the higher costs of extreme weather events, insurance and electric bills due to the climate crisis. Thankfully the IRA and the Infrastructure Law are working to lower the cost of energy, reduce pollution and spur new factories, jobs and progress. Over the past four years, nearly 1,000 new or expanded clean energy factories have been announced along with 800,000 new manufacturing jobs and \$422 billion in private sector investments. New battery plants, clean vehicle factories, and solar and wind manufacturing centers are breathing new life into communities, local economies and small businesses.

DOE also houses the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), an agency tasked with securing dangerous nuclear material and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Musk and associates should not be granted access to NNSA or be allowed to operate with the same recklessness they have shown at other agencies. The Administration simply cannot risk making nuclear material less safe. Even inadvertent inquiries into how the NNSA spends money abroad could compromise sensitive information about cooperation between the United States and other governments to keep highly enriched uranium secure.¹

That is why the early actions of the Trump Administration are cause for concern, including the firing of the DOE Inspector General who is responsible for rooting out waste, fraud and abuse. Nothing in the early Trump executive orders is designed to lower energy prices and help hardworking Americans. Instead, across the board the actions are a gift to Big Oil companies designed to boost their profits at the expense of working families.

It is the essential mission of the DOE Office of the Inspector General (DOE-OIG) to conduct oversight of the Department of Energy, strengthening the integrity, economy, and efficiency of the Department's programs and operations. The office's work is especially important following President Trump's illegal firing of Inspectors General across the government in January. Therefore, we ask the office to conduct an urgent review of the actions of the DOGE at DOE and respond in writing to the following questions as soon as possible:

1. Has the Musk team, or any individuals or entities operating under the guise of or direction of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) (including any individuals who may have been onboarded to the Agency and received an Agency or Departmental email address), requested or received access to any NNSA system?
 - a. If so, what type of information are they reviewing, and for what purpose?
 - b. Have laws, guidance, and regulations been appropriately followed in accessing such data?

2. Has the Musk team, or any individuals or entities operating under the guise of or direction of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), gained access to any DOE system that includes personally identifiable information or the data of companies seeking government funding or support?
 - a. If so, what laws, guidance, and regulations are being followed to ensure appropriate and robust limits are being placed on the access, use, maintenance, creation, editing, transfer, and sharing of such information?

¹ The Atlantic, *If DOGE Goes Nuclear* (Feb. 5, 2025) (www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/02/elon-musk-doge-nuclear-weapons/681581)

3. Have any private or commercial servers been connected or integrated into DOE or NNSA data systems to access, review, create, modify, delete, move, or otherwise change data?
 - a. If so, have proper DOE, NNSA, or other federal protocols been followed in using a non-federal data system?
4. To what extent has the Musk team, or any individual or entity operating under the direction of or in concert with DOGE (including any individuals who may have been onboarded to the Agency and received an Agency or Departmental email address) undergone appropriate federal screening and training to responsibly access the data they have been reviewing, editing, modifying, or deleting?
5. What safeguards have DOE undertaken to ensure there are no conflicts of interest among Elon Musk, DOGE, or any individuals or entities operating under the guise of or direction of DOGE (including such individuals who may have been onboarded to the Department and received a Departmental email address)?
6. What steps have DOE or NNSA undertaken to avoid improper access, use, creation, deletion, transfer, or sharing of Department or Agency data or program vulnerabilities related to DOGE's access to the Department or Agency?

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Kathy Castor
United States Representative
Florida – District 14