

February 5, 2025

Everett Woodel, Jr.
Acting Administrator
Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Acting Administrator Woodel:

I write regarding reports that the Small Business Administration (SBA) granted individuals associated with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), led by Elon Musk, access to all SBA data and payment systems. The SBA's apparent complicity in this unlawful incursion and unauthorized access to the private and confidential information of millions of small businesses, homeowners, and renters nationwide who have utilized SBA's programs — including its business loan and disaster assistance programs — is deeply troubling. As part of its congressional oversight responsibilities, this Committee must be confident that only authorized and qualified SBA staff have access to and control over SBA's systems and the private information they contain.

According to initial reports, on February 3, Edward Coristine, a DOGE official, held a call with SBA staff detailing the level of access to SBA systems that DOGE wanted.¹ It included SBA human resources, contract, and payment systems information.² “Employees were told this access was cleared, but weren't told by whom, and that access needed to [be] granted in a very short time frame to Coristine and Donald Park, who appears to be an adviser to DOGE.”

Allowing Elon Musk's minions access to the sensitive information in the SBA's systems raises privacy, data security, and other serious concerns. SBA is an understaffed and underfunded agency whose mission is to aid, counsel, and assist small businesses. Last fiscal year, the SBA provided \$37.7 billion in loan assistance,³ achieved a record 100,000 financings,⁴ and made disaster loans to nearly 10,000 small businesses and 18,000 homeowners and renters totaling a combined \$1.6 billion.⁵ And during the COVID pandemic, SBA provided more than

¹ @lbarronlopez, X (f/k/a Twitter) (Feb. 3, 2025, 2:05 PM), <https://x.com/lbarronlopez/status/1886491276729544809com/lbarronlopez/status/1886491276729544809>.

² *Id.*

³ *Fiscal Year 2024 SBA annual performance report*, U.S. Small Business Admin. (Jan. 2025), <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/FY%202024%20SBA%20Annual%20Performance%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *End of Term Report, Administrator Isabel Guzman*, U.S. Small Business Admin. (Jan. 2025), <https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/Administrator%20Guzman%20End%20of%20Term%20Report%20-%201.2025%20-%20Final.pdf>.

22.1 million loans and grants to small business, totaling \$1.2 trillion.⁶ The data related to this important work must not be made open to possible compromise, misuse, or destruction by unauthorized and unqualified interlopers from DOGE.

Complicating the safeguarding and responsible handling of the SBA's systems is the absence of an inspector general at the agency. One of President Trump's first actions upon taking office last month was to illegally and without cause fire at least seventeen independent inspectors general, including SBA Inspector General (IG) Hannibal "Mike" Ware. If the Trump administration truly cares about government efficiency and preventing waste, fraud, and abuse, it should immediately reinstate IG Ware, a dedicated civil servant with more than 34 years of experience who was responsible for heading up government-wide efforts that led to the return of nearly \$9 billion in COVID Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) funds to the SBA.

In order for me to better understand how and why DOGE gained access to SBA systems, please provide written responses to the following questions no later than February 12, 2025:

1. Why was DOGE granted access to SBA's systems? Please identify the legal basis on which SBA granted DOGE this access.
2. Which specific SBA systems and databases does DOGE have the ability to access? Which of those systems and databases has DOGE in fact accessed?
3. Please provide the names, titles, and pay grades of the individuals from DOGE who were granted access, as well as the same information for any political appointees or other individuals at SBA who granted DOGE access to these systems and databases.
4. Did any SBA employees object to DOGE being given access to SBA's systems? If so, please identify them, the basis for their objection, and how the objection was handled.
5. What safeguards are being put in place to protect the data of the millions of small business owners that is now available to DOGE?
6. Will DOGE have the power to cancel SBA contracts or stop payments on contracts?
7. Has anyone at SBA been placed on administrative leave as a result of DOGE's unauthorized access to SBA systems?

⁶ *Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the Small Business Administration in Fiscal Year 2025*, Rep. 25-01, U.S. Small Business Admin. Office of the Inspector General (Oct. 15, 2024), <https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports/2024-10/SBA-OIG-Report-25-01.pdf>.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving your prompt responses to my questions.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey

Ranking Member

Senate Committee on Small Business and
Entrepreneurship