



Trump administration says it has no plans to fulfill \$400 million 'armored Tesla' contract

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Bobby Allyn



A Tesla Cybertruck moves along the beach in Boca Chica, Texas, on Nov. 18, 2024.

Eric Gay/AP

This story has been updated.

The State Department said Thursday it is abandoning plans of purchasing \$400 million worth of armored Tesla vehicles after a public document detailing federal contracts for fiscal year 2025 gained wide attention.

That expected purchase of Teslas, which was slated for September of this year, is now on hold, according to the State Department, which now says it has no plans of fulfilling the contract.

The potential federal purchase drew scrutiny since Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk is also a top White House official who has been leading the Department of Government Efficiency, a unit focused on shrinking the federal workforce and ferreting out corruption.

The document did not specify what Tesla vehicles would be purchased by U.S. officials, but Musk's Cybertruck, with its militaristic design and stainless steel exterior, could have been an option.

After [reports](#) circulated Wednesday night of the State Department's intent to purchase Tesla vehicles, NPR noticed that the document was edited, at 9:12 p.m., to say the federal contract is for \$400 million worth of "armored electric vehicles," but the word "Tesla" was removed.

Responding to a segment by MSNBC's Rachel Maddow about the \$400 million contract, Musk wrote on X on Wednesday night: "Hey @Maddow, why the lie?"

The Tesla contract started in the Biden administration "to explore interest from private companies to produce armored electric vehicles," a State Department spokesperson said on Thursday.

Tesla was the only company to express interest in the department's request at the time.

Typically the next step would be "an official solicitation" for vehicle manufacturers to compete for the contract. But now, the solicitation is on hold, according to the State Department spokesperson.

Musk did not return a request for comment.

Musk, who spent more than a quarter-billion dollars to help elect Trump, has used an X account devoted to DOGE to highlight what he views as excessive or unnecessary federal contracts.

As Musk's deputies have gained access to nearly two dozen federal agencies, ethics experts have raised concern about the billionaire running into conflicts of interest, since Musk runs six companies, some of which are under investigation by government authorities. Musk's companies, including Tesla and SpaceX, also have multibillion-dollar contracts with the federal government.

Most of the federal money Musk has received has gone to SpaceX, the rocket company, for projects including [work for NASA to launch](#) Musk's Starship with astronauts to the moon.

A new Cybertruck starts at around \$82,000, and about 38,000 were sold last year, according to [Cox Automotive](#). The truck, which was unveiled in 2019 and began reaching customers in 2023, has faced [complaints](#) about rust, finger pinches and defective accelerator pedals.

The State Department document also shows that some Tesla competitors are set to receive lucrative, yet considerably smaller, contracts for armored vehicles, including from BMW, which is expected to supply about \$40 million worth of SUVs to the federal government.

Have information you want to share about the ongoing changes across the federal government? Bobby Allyn is available via the encrypted messaging app Signal at ballyn.77

Clarification

Feb. 13, 2025

This story has been updated to clarify that Cybertruck deliveries did not start until 2023.



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