

DOGE Reportedly Cuts FDA Employees Investigating Neuralink

The FDA previously found Musk's company was engaging in "objectionable conditions or practices."

By AJ Dellinger

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The purging of federal employees carried out by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) somehow just keeps cutting staffers involved in investigating Elon Musk's companies. According to a report from Reuters, several employees at the US Food and Drug Administration who were tasked with managing reviews and applications related to Musk's Neuralink received pink slips over the weekend.

Per Reuters, 20 people who worked in the FDA's office of neurological and physical medicine devices got axed as part of a broader effort being carried out by DOGE to cut down the federal workforce. Several of those employees worked directly on Neuralink, Musk's company that produces brain-computer interfaces designed to be implanted in a human brain, and were tasked with reviewing clinical trial applications.

While the sources Reuters spoke to said they did not think those employees were specifically targeted, the reduction of workers within the medical devices office isn't going to make things any easier for companies like Neuralink, which likely wants to see the approval process speed up. Fewer people to approve applications either means that the process slows down even more or corners get cut. Take a guess at which of those options Musk likely prefers.

Targeted or not, it's noteworthy just how frequently people involved in regulating Musk-owned

companies are getting hit by DOGE-initiated layoffs. According to a report from the New York Times, at least 11 federal agencies targeted by DOGE cuts have ongoing actions related to Musk’s firms—a total of 32 investigations, complaints, and enforcement actions that seem likely to either grind to a halt or disappear as a result of staff reductions.

Neuralink in particular seems to have benefited from efforts to squash watchdogs. Last month, the Inspector General at the US Department of Agriculture had to be removed from her office by security after refusing to comply with her termination, which she believed was illegal. She happened to be heading up an investigation into Neuralink looking into whether the company was violating animal welfare rules related to its tests on animal subjects.

The FDA, too, has been looking into similar issues. Last year, the agency found that Neuralink’s animal labs engaged in “objectionable conditions or practices” and urged the company to address the issues—but did not issue any punitive actions related to the investigation.

Neuralink and the FDA also had a standoff over allowing the company to move forward with human trials, a request that the FDA rejected over safety risks in 2022 before finally allowing limited trials to move forward a year later. In 2024, the FDA even gave Neuralink its “breakthrough device” designation, which allows for a speedier review process. The only thing faster might be no review at all.

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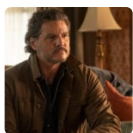
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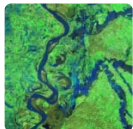
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