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January 13, 2025

Transition Co-Chairs Howard Lutnick and Linda McMahon
Mar-a-Lago
1100 S. Ocean Blvd.
Palm Beach, FL 33480

Dear Transition Co-Chairs Howard Lutnick and Linda McMahon:

We are co-presidents of the nonprofit consumer advocacy organization Public Citizen. For more than 50 years, Public Citizen has worked for strong—and smart—regulation to advance the public good. We thus write to request our appointment as members of the “Department of Government Efficiency” (DOGE).

President-elect Trump has charged Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy with leading DOGE, an advisory committee to “provide advice and guidance from outside of Government, [that] will partner with the White House and Office of Management and Budget [OMB] to drive large scale structural reform, and create an entrepreneurial approach to Government never seen before.”

Public Citizen has concerns about DOGE’s structure and mission. In structure, an advisory committee led by individuals such as Messrs. Musk and Ramaswamy who hold financial interests that will be directly affected by federal budgetary policies presents substantial conflict of interest concerns that threaten to undermine public confidence in the committee’s recommendations to the administration. And DOGE’s mission to advise OMB on how to “slash excess regulation” and “cut wasteful expenditures” puts at risk important consumer safeguards and public protections, because it focuses only on eliminating rules and spending without considering the other half of the picture: more efficiently regulating corporations to better protect consumers and the public from harmful corporate practices, and making sound and efficient public investments.

Despite these concerns, Mr. Trump has given no indication that, once inaugurated, he will reconsider his decision to designate Messrs. Musk and Ramaswamy as DOGE’s leaders or his decision to direct OMB to partner with DOGE to cut federal spending and regulation. Accordingly, and in light of the significant influence that DOGE is expected to have on the administration’s fiscal and regulatory policy, Mr. Trump and OMB should take steps to ensure that DOGE’s advice and recommendations take into consideration the viewpoints of the consumers and citizens who

would be directly affected by the regulatory and spending proposals that DOGE will advance, not only the viewpoint of wealthy businesspeople.

To that end, we request our appointment to serve as members of DOGE as voices for the interests of consumers and the public who are the beneficiaries of federal regulatory and spending programs. Appointing us to DOGE would be consistent with the expectations that Mr. Trump has articulated for DOGE. We would both be voices for consumers and the public from “outside of Government”; we share Mr. Trump’s stated goal of “making changes to the Federal Bureaucracy” to “make life better for all Americans,” and we agree with Mr. Trump that the “U.S. Government” should be “accountable to ‘WE THE PEOPLE.’” Moreover, our appointment to DOGE would not raise conflict of interest concerns because, unlike Mr. Musk, neither of us nor Public Citizen has a financial interest in federal government contracts and spending. In bringing the consumer and public perspective to DOGE, we can offer views that are truly untainted by the appearance of corruption or self-dealing.

As co-presidents of Public Citizen, we have a direct interest in DOGE’s mission of advising the administration on, and making recommendations regarding, the federal government’s regulatory and spending policies. Since its founding in 1971, Public Citizen has worked to hold the government and corporations accountable to the people, including by focusing on research and advocacy with respect to regulation of health, safety, consumer finance, and the environment. Indeed, an entire section of our website, [citizen.org](https://www.citizen.org), is titled “Making Government Work.”

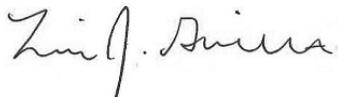
Consistent with Public Citizen’s mission—and that of DOGE—Public Citizen on December 20, 2024, sent Messrs. Musk and Ramaswamy a letter proposing two measures that would save the government and taxpayers billions of dollars, while improving health and access to medicines: authorizing generic competition to anti-obesity medications and implementing the Medicare drug price negotiation and inflation rebate programs to lower drug prices. Public Citizen has also advocated for reductions in Pentagon spending, which could trim billions from the federal budget; changes to privatized Medicare (“Medicare Advantage”), which could save a trillion dollars over the next decade; and elimination of wasteful and harmful oil and gas subsidies, which could save taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars, among other measures. We have also supported efficient public investments—ranging from early childhood education programs to measures to mitigate climate change—that would both advance the broad public interest and generate positive monetary returns.

Appointing us to DOGE would be an important step towards compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), which requires “the membership of the advisory committee to be fairly balanced in terms of the points of view represented and the functions to be performed by the advisory committee.” As things stand, DOGE’s membership falls far short of satisfying FACA’s fair-balance requirement. Mr. Musk, the world’s richest individual, has corporate financial interests that stand to benefit from a reduction in federal regulation and an interest in shielding his companies from federal spending cuts. Mr. Ramaswamy, also a billionaire investor, founded a biotech firm that stands to benefit from weaker federal drug regulation. DOGE member Katie Miller’s background is in handling press relations for government officials. William McGinley

worked as a lawyer for various Republican Party groups and big law firms. Other people reported in the media as connected with DOGE also appear to have corporate backgrounds. These individuals lack the consumer and public interest perspective needed if Mr. Trump expects DOGE to have any hope of complying with FACA.

We look forward to your, or Mr. Trump's, prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,



Lisa Gilbert
Co-president, Public Citizen



Robert Weissman
Co-president, Public Citizen