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Trump administration was set to purchase \$400 million worth of armored Teslas

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Bobby Allyn



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

Eric Gay/AP

The Trump administration is expected to purchase \$400 million worth of armored Tesla vehicles, according to a new State Department document detailing procurement for fiscal year 2025.

Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk is 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 does not specify what Tesla vehicles will be purchased by U.S. officials, but Musk's Cybertruck, with its militaristic design and stainless steel exterior, could be an option.

After reports circulated Wednesday night of the State Department's intent to purchase Tesla vehicles, the document was edited, at 9:12 p.m., and now says 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 State Department and Musk did not return requests 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

While a previous version of this story noted that the Cybertruck launched in 2019, deliveries did not start until 2023.

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Elon Musk's DOGE takes aim at agency that had plans of regulating X