

Trump memo calls on U.S. federal agencies to prepare for mass layoffs



Demonstrators protest against US President Donald Trump and Elon Musk outside the US Capitol on February 25 [Kevin Lamarque/Reuters]

Washington, February 27 (RHC)-- The administration of U.S. President Donald Trump has ordered federal agencies to work with Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to prepare for mass firings of federal workers.

In a memo released on Wednesday, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) said the layoffs will be part of a restructuring plan due on March 13.

Trump also teased the firings in his first cabinet meeting shortly afterwards, singling out the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under administrator Lee Zeldin, as one target.

"I spoke with Lee Zeldin, and he thinks he's going to be cutting 65 or so percent of the people from environmental," Trump said.

The memo is the latest part of an effort by Trump and Musk to dismantle government agencies and programmes that have long been disliked by conservatives — or are seen as unfriendly to Trump's agenda.

While Trump has insisted they are working to shrink a bloated bureaucracy and save taxpayer money, critics point out that a tax bill being pushed forward by Republicans would lead to a massive increase in the deficit, with benefits largely accruing to the wealthiest Americans.

Before his return to the White House in January, Trump and his allies spoke about the need to purge the government of workers they regarded as insufficiently loyal.

During a rally on the first day of his second term, Trump renewed that sentiment, calling to remove what he termed "Biden bureaucrats" — a reference to former President Joe Biden.

But experts point out that many federal workers are nonpartisan civil service workers who help maintain stability between different presidential administrations.

Agencies central to immigration and law enforcement were exempt from the layoffs sketched out in Wednesday's memo.

The legality of the mass-layoff efforts has been challenged in court, where critics have argued that the executive branch does not have the authority to dismantle agencies created and funded by the US Congress.

Such legal challenges have enjoyed mixed success, however. Some judges have placed temporary restraining orders on the Trump administration's funding freezes and staffing shakeups, while others have allowed Trump to move forward with his plans.

[SOURCE: AL JAZEERA and NEWS AGENCIES]

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