

Elon Musk's SpaceX gets a company town in Texas

South Texas voters mostly employed by Elon Musk's SpaceX have approved a measure to incorporate as Starbase, a new city in Texas' Cameron County near the company's Boca Chica Beach launch site on the Gulf of Mexico. The final tally was 212–6 in support of the measure, reports *The Associated Press*.

The election took place following a petition that had gained enough signatures by February to force a vote, in which just 283 people were eligible to participate, according to *The Texas Tribune*. Last week, an analysis by public journalism collaboration *The TexasNewsroom* found that three in five of those people were SpaceX employees, and per the *Tribune*, the city will be led by three people with ties to SpaceX.

With the measure approved, SpaceX now stands to gain more control over the launch site. As the *Tribune* notes, the company has to get permission from Cameron County officials to close Boca Chica Beach for launches, but Texas Senate Bill 2188 could change that. The bill doesn't mention Starbase, which wasn't a city when it was written, but would give the power to approve beach closures to a municipality that meets certain conditions, including containing "a spaceport" and existing within a county that "borders the Gulf of Mexico or its tidewater limits."

As that bill makes its way through the state legislature, the federal government is seemingly losing its ability to constrain SpaceX. Musk's DOGE has worked under President Donald Trump to hamstring federal agencies, including The Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Aviation Administration, whose regulatory authority the billionaire's

company falls under.

<https://www.theverge.com/news/660773/elon-musk-spacex-starbase-texas-vote>