

FAA staff reportedly ordered to find funding for deal with Musk's Starlink

Officials at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Friday ordered staff "to begin finding tens of millions of dollars for a Starlink deal" to upgrade air traffic control communications, anonymous sources have told *Rolling Stone*. The story follows reports that Starlink may be taking the job from Verizon, which already has a multibillion-dollar contract with the government to improve the system.

According to *Rolling Stone*, the talks "have mostly, if not entirely, been delivered verbally," something its sources say is "unusual for a matter like this." One person the outlet spoke with suggested that it looked like "someone does not want a paper trail." *Rolling Stone* says it's not clear whether the Verizon contract has ended yet, nor if any Starlink deal is official. Starlink is a subsidiary of SpaceX, which DOGE head Elon Musk owns.

Referring to previous reporting in a statement issued yesterday, House Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and James Clyburn (D-SC) called the reported deal "a glaring conflict of interest" in light of Musk's government role at the head of DOGE, which has been directing massive, chaotic changes to federal bureaucracy. The two said the deal's changes would represent "dangerous actions that put Elon Musk's personal wealth over the American people's lives."

Musk insisted last week that Verizon's system was "breaking down very rapidly" and putting flyers at risk. He later corrected himself, noting the Verizon system is "not yet

operational” and that the one he was criticizing “was made L3 Harris.” He also claimed Starlink is providing terminals for free to “restore air traffic control connectivity.”

<https://www.theverge.com/news/622502/faa-orders-staff-find-funding-starlink-verizon-deal>