One space station company sues another for copying its work



“The Department of Justice reviewed Axiom’s allegations and declined to intervene,” the spokesperson said. “We think that decision speaks for itself. Axiom’s complaint does not describe a fraud on the government, and it does not meet the basic requirements of the False Claims Act.”

The Justice Department’s decision does not establish whether Vast improperly used Axiom’s materials. In False Claims Act cases, federal prosecutors may decline to intervene for a variety of reasons, including doubts about the case’s legal merits, the availability of evidence, or the potential recovery. The government provided no explanation for its decision in the court filing. Axiom remains free to pursue the lawsuit on its own.

And the company appears poised to do so. Vast said it would defend itself “vigorously” in legal proceedings. The company

also said its work with NASA on the sixth Private Astronaut Mission—for which customers have already been announced—is proceeding without difficulty or interruption.

The timing is important

NASA now finds itself the central witness in a case involving two of the leading companies chasing private space station contracts that could ultimately be worth billions of dollars. Other potential contenders include Voyager, Blue Origin, and possibly SpaceX.

The agency declined to provide a substantive comment for this article. “NASA is aware of the matter but does not comment on litigation,” agency spokesman George Alderman told Ars.

The commercial space stations program, which dates back half a decade, has been a rough-and-tumble contest as private companies have jostled for favor with NASA. Ultimately, the space agency is expected to pick only a few winners to finish their space stations in low-Earth orbit and pay handsomely for NASA astronauts to visit there in the 2030s.

At times, this contest has turned personal. In September 2025, for example, far-right political activist Laura Loomer shared an in-depth post on the social media site X purporting to link Vast chief executive Max Haot, who was born in Belgium, and Vast with Chinese interests. These allegations, which raised national security concerns, were wholly unsubstantiated. A recent Washington Post investigation reported that Loomer has received payments for some political posts on X.

It is also not the only lawsuit Axiom has filed this year. In April, after policy advisor Ramzi Masri-Elyafaoui left the company to work for rival Vast, Axiom sued to stop him, alleging he violated a non-compete agreement. In June, a Houston federal judge dismissed the case with prejudice.

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