‘Tesla Takedown’ protesters planning ‘biggest day of action’

Tesla protesters are planning their “biggest day of action” yet, aiming for 500 demonstrations at Tesla showrooms across the world on March 29th, organizers said during a mobilizing call Wednesday.

The protests started at a handful of Tesla locations in early February, and has grown to hundreds of locations across the world, as more people have come out to demonstrate against CEO Elon Musk’s dismantling of the federal government. Waving signs and chanting slogans, the so-called Tesla Takedown protesters have become a flashpoint for opposition to Musk’s actions to eliminate federal aid programs and fire tens of thousands of government employees as the head of DOGE, or the Department of Government Efficiency.

There have also been an uptick in incidents of arson, vandalism, and violence against Tesla showrooms that, while unrelated to the protests, have led to Musk and President Donald Trump labeling them “domestic terrorism.” Other members of the Trump administration have signaled the protesters could come under scrutiny as well. Attorney General Pam Bondi promised “severe consequences on those involved in these attacks, including those operating behind the scenes to coordinate and fund these crimes.”

People participate in a “TeslaTakedown” protest against Elon Musk outside of a Tesla dealership in New York, March 1, 2025. (Photo by Leonardo Munoz / AFP) (Photo by LEONARDO MUNOZ/AFP via Getty Images)

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The hour-long call, which included actors, filmmakers, members of Congress, federal workers, academics, and journalists, tried to steer clear of Trump's talk of "terrorism," keeping the focus on Musk and the effort to tank the company's stock price. Tesla's stock has lost nearly 40 percent of its value since the beginning of the year, as poor sales and rising competition in the US and overseas have fueled growing pessimism about the company's future.

"There is no conspiracy, there is no well-funded cabal," said actor and filmmaker Alex Winter, who helped promote the protests early on on BlueSky. "It's just Elon Musk who has taken Tesla down."

Alice Hu, executive director of Planet Over Profit, said that protesters were aiming for 500 events across the world on March 29th, with demonstrations at all 277 Tesla showrooms in the US, as well as hundreds more overseas. Protesters should even feel free to demonstrate at Supercharger stations, she said.

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"We need to show Elon that he can throw a tantrum online because his stocks are tainting," Hu said. "He can get Trump to put on a humiliating used car show in front of the White House. These wannabe authoritarians can try to intimidate us from exercising our First Amendment rights, but they can't stop us from fighting back."

Organizers were adamant that their movement was peaceful, often going out of their way to stress the nonviolent nature of the demonstrations.

"The things that we're fighting for, we are fighting for our country," Rep. Jasmine Crockett (D-Tex.) said. "We're fighting for democracy. We're fighting for our freedoms. And when I say

fighting, I’m saying that figuratively. Obviously, everything that I am promoting is nonviolent.”

With Trump promising domestic terrorism charges for violence against Tesla, organizers advised that protesters consult attorneys to better understand the laws in their states. Some states have statutes that could be used to intimidate protesters, so its worthwhile to know what you’re up against, said Lauren Regan, executive director and senior staff attorney at the Civil Liberties Defense Center. She said in her experience, states are often hesitant to prosecute activists because there’s a strong likelihood those statutes will be found unconstitutional.

“Their goal is to just pluck a few individuals out and scare the rest of us into submission and apathy,” Regan said. “There are going to be some areas of the country that are very conservative and are gonna be hard on dissidents or activists, no matter what the timing.”

The sharp decrease in Tesla’s stock in recent weeks has clearly invigorated the protests. Several speakers spoke of Tesla’s collapse as not only possible, but likely. Micah Lee, an investigative journalist who was among a group of Twitter users to have their accounts banned by Musk shortly after his acquisition of the social platform, said that going after Tesla’s value was a “solid strategy.”

“If we kill the Tesla brand, if we drive down the stock price low enough, we can force him to sell his stock to pay back the billions of dollars of debt that he took on to buy Twitter,” Lee said. “This will drive Tesla’s stock into a death spiral.”

Musk’s status as the richest man in the world is largely thanks to Tesla’s stock price. He owns 13 percent of the company, making him the single largest shareholder. As of today, the company is worth $739 billion – down from 1.08 trillion earlier this year, meaning Musk’s stake is worth

about $96 billion. And Tesla's board of directors is composed of close friends and relatives, raising concerns about its independence from the controversial CEO. Several board members, including chair Robyn Denholm and James Murdoch, have sold over $100 million in Tesla stock in recent weeks.

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But it's not clear that hurting Tesla will actually matter much to Musk. He remains in Trump's good graces, and is wielding vast amounts of control within the federal government. Even if these protests can seriously affect Tesla, Musk has consolidated so much political power that, after a certain point, it's not clear whether market forces still apply as strongly.

Musk's love of memes – he recently quipped "I am become meme" at CPAC – is a sign that the world's richest man is living in a different reality than most people, which could be an advantage, said Joan Donovan,
an assistant professor of journalism and emerging media studies at Boston University who studies media manipulation, disinformation, and online political movements.

"He thinks of himself as this black hat hacker that's broken into the government and socially engineered his way into the Treasury and he's gonna abscond with all the data, it's an obvious data heist," Donovan said. "But he believes he's living in a meme, and so we need to be very clear about what our demands are, about what our bright lines are, and that we're not gonna stop until Tesla is done with Musk."

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