

SEC Reached Out to Aspiring Tesla Whistle-Blower, Attorney Says

By Matt Robinson and Josh Eidelson

The Securities and Exchange Commission has reached out to a former Tesla Inc. employee who filed a whistle-blower claim with the regulator and accused the carmaker of making misstatements and omissions to investors, according to an attorney representing the ex-worker.

Martin Tripp, who Tesla Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk has portrayed as a saboteur, left the electric-car maker on June 19 and was sued by the company shortly thereafter. Tripp escalated the battle by submitting a tip to the SEC earlier this month alleging that Tesla was inflating weekly Model 3 production figures. One of Tripp's lawyers, Stuart Meissner, tweeted Wednesday that the regulator had followed up on the claim.

“Received a call back this week from SEC enforcement,” Meissner wrote. “Will be following up next week. Will not be commenting on our interactions going forward out of respect for the SEC.”

Judith Burns, an SEC spokeswoman, declined to comment. Tesla representatives didn't immediately respond to an emailed inquiry.

Any attempt by the SEC to review Tripp's claims doesn't mean the regulator has opened a formal investigation, and scrutiny of such allegations doesn't necessarily result in the agency alleging wrongdoing against a company.