

From: Thomas Catenacci
Sent: Fri, 11 Jul 2025 09:52:06 -0400
To: Woods, Andrea
Cc: Dietderich, Ben; DOE NEWS
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Question on Grain Belt Express

Andrea, wanted to follow up on this. Thank you!



On Thu, Jul 10, 2025 at 4:51 PM Thomas Catenacci <catenacci@freebeacon.com> wrote:
Hey Andrea, was just filing my story when I saw
this: <https://x.com/HawleyMO/status/1943408766629650779>

Will DOE comment on this or share any more info?

Thanks!

Thomas



On Wed, Jul 9, 2025 at 8:47 PM Woods, Andrea <andrea.woods@hq.doe.gov> wrote:

Hi Thomas,

Sharing our statement below:

“Grain Belt secured a conditional commitment from LPO in November 2024. No loan funds have been extended.

“The Department of Energy is undergoing a thorough review of all financial assistance, funding, and loans, on a case-by-case basis to identify waste of taxpayer dollars, protect America’s national security and advance affordable, reliable and secure energy for the American people. As DOE conducts this review, we do have concerns that the previous administration through the LPO conditionally committed billions of dollars of funding to go out the door in the final months of the Biden administration, and this administration is doing our due diligence to ensure every single dollar spent is in the best interest of the American people.” **-DOE Spokesperson**

Background:

While Grain Belt's conditional commitment indicates DOE's intent to finance the project, DOE must complete an environmental review, and the borrower must satisfy certain technical, legal, environmental, and financial conditions before the Department enters into definitive financing documents and funds the loan guarantee.

Thanks!

Andrea

From: Thomas Catenacci <catenacci@freebeacon.com>
Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 1:51 PM
To: Woods, Andrea <andrea.woods@hq.doe.gov>
Cc: Dietderich, Ben <ben.dietderich@hq.doe.gov>, DOE NEWS <doenews@hq.doe.gov>
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Question on Grain Belt Express

Hey Andrea, it's 12pm tomorrow.

Appreciate it!

Thomas



On Wed, Jul 9, 2025 at 1:48 PM Woods, Andrea <andrea.woods@hq.doe.gov> wrote:

Hi Thomas,

What's your deadline for this story?

Thanks,
Andrea

From: Thomas Catenacci <catenacci@freebeacon.com>
Date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 1:27 PM
To: Woods, Andrea <andrea.woods@hq.doe.gov>, Dietderich, Ben <ben.dietderich@hq.doe.gov>
Cc: DOE NEWS <doenews@hq.doe.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Question on Grain Belt Express

Hi Andrea and Ben,

Does DOE have any comment on its actions moving forward with the review process for Grain Belt Express? Does DOE have any comment on Sen. Hawley's and Missouri AG Bailey's comments and concerns with this project?

<https://x.com/HawleyMO/status/1942955326698897917>

<https://www.hawley.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Hawley-Follow-Up-Letter-to-DOE-re-Grain-Belt-Express.pdf>

<https://ago.mo.gov/missouri-attorney-general-bailey-investigates-grain-belt-express-over-history-of-lies-and-false-promises/>

And I wanted to call your attention to something we came across that I haven't seen reported regarding Invenergy, Grain Belt's developer.

Invenergy is the majority owner of solar panel manufacturer Illuminate USA. However, it is a 51-49% joint ownership stake with LONGi Solar, a massive Chinese CCP-tied solar maker. LONGi Solar has a polysilicon contract with Daqo New Energy. And Illuminate USA's CEO is Frank Zhu, who was previously an EVP at GCL New Energy. Both Daqo and GCL are on the DHS entity list, meaning the U.S. government has evidence of the two companies using forced labor in the Xinjiang province of China.

This is particularly interesting because Invenergy is Illuminate USA's anchor customer. That suggests the company's solar farms, which will feed into the Grain Belt Express, use Illuminate/LONGi panels. Invenergy notes on its website that the transmission line feeds a region that is home to 25% of the nation's military installations—and Reuters recently reported Chinese solar panels have been found to have rogue communications devices.

I know this is a lot of information—we are planning on writing a story about the potential national security concerns related to this project, but want to give DOE the opportunity to respond or comment on it first since this may be new information.

Please let me know if DOE is interested in commenting.

All the best,

Thomas Catenacci

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