

From: Thomas Catenacci
Sent: Wed, 9 Jul 2025 13:49:47 -0400
To: Woods, Andrea
Cc: Dietderich, Ben; DOE NEWS
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

Reporter | Washington Free Beacon

e: catenacci@freebeacon.com

c: (b) (6)



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