



Gotion chinese company

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Alan Rappeport is an economic policy reporter, based in Washington. He covers the Treasury Department and writes about taxes, trade and fiscal matters. He previously worked for The Financial Times and The Economist. More about Alan Rappeport

While Gotion is "wholly owned and controlled" by a Chinese company, the Chinese government has no stake in that parent company, one of its law firms said in an April Foreign Agent Registration Act filing. The FARA paperwork, filed with the U.S. Department of Justice by agents working on Gotion's behalf, shows the company has had to address concerns about wetlands on its proposed Michigan manufacturing plant. The filing also reveals that the law firm and Gotion had to consider a possible conflict of interest involving the firm and an economic development organization.

The filing was first reported by The Midwesterner, and it opens a window on the machinations that went into building political support for the \$2.4 billion electric vehicle battery plant near Big Rapids.

"Gotion Inc. is wholly owned and controlled by Hefei Gotion High-Tech Power Energy Co., Ltd," reads the answer to question 12 of the declaration form, which asks who owns and controls the foreign organization in question.

The declaration, however, says that the Chinese government has no say in Gotion's controlling organization. Asked whether Hefei is supervised, owned, directed, controlled, financed or subsidized "by a foreign government, foreign political party, or other foreign principal," it answered no to all.

The Company shall set up a Party organization and carry out Party activities in accordance with the Constitution of the Communist Party of China. The Company shall ensure necessary conditions for carrying out Party activities. The secretary of the Party committee shall be the chairman.

Ensure and supervise the implementation of the Party's guidelines, principles and policies in the Company, and implement major strategic decisions of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council as well as relevant important work arrangements of the Party organization at the higher level...

Seven times in January and February, Gotion representatives met with government officials to discuss wetlands. Two of the meetings were teleconferences with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy Assistant Director Jerrod Sanders. Five others involved multiple staffers from both EGLE and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Gotion and The Right Place, the economic development firm that lured it to West Michigan, are represented by the same law firm, Warner Norcross and Judd, which also filed the foreign agent form.



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After the law firm conducted an internal review, it found no conflict in representing both firms, attorney Matthew D. Johnson explained in a two-page letter that is part of the filing. Gotion vice president Chuck Thelen signed off on the conflict-of-interest waiver, which is partially pictured below.

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