



Michigan - China Economic and Security Review Group

4 April 2023

Mr. Matthew Olsen
Assistant Attorney General for National Security
National Security Division
c/o FARA Unit
U.S. Department of Justice
175 N Street, NE
Constitution Square, Building 3 - Room 1.300
Washington, D.C. 20002

RE: Potential FARA Violations Through Lobbying Engagements for Gotion, Inc. and Related Companies in the State of Michigan

Transmitted Via E-mail: 

Dear Mr. Olsen:

As former ambassadorial colleagues well aware of the adversarial engagements of the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) throughout the World, we are writing to you with grave concern over possible violations of the Foreign Agents Registration Act, 22 U.S.C. 611 (FARA), involving the ongoing attempt by parties in the State of Michigan to lobby, advocate, and solicit for the presence of a particular lithium ion battery manufacturer based in the PRC, that maintains ties to the CCP, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPCC), and the United Front Work Department (UFWD), and request you review these engagements and take any appropriate action.

Since late 2021, many local elected officials, economic development institutions, and others in the public and private sector as parties to this proposed project have signed and are operating under binding 5 year non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) and code names further shrouding the activity surrounding their lobbying and other advocacy efforts to bring the Hefei, China-based Guoxuan (Gotion) High-Tech Power Energy Company into Mecosta County Michigan, and which is being incentivized through \$1.14 billion dollars in taxpayer-funded economic incentives.

As you know, FARA requires public disclosure obligations on individuals or entities representing foreign interests. Specifically, it requires "foreign agents" - defined as individuals or entities engaged in lobbying or advocacy for foreign governments, organizations or "foreign principals" to register with the Department of Justice and disclose their activities, relationships, activities,

and related financial compensation. Anything found to the contrary is a violation of federal law, and upon conviction can be punishable by fines or imprisonment.

Dominant media coverage notwithstanding, elected officials and citizen leaders are particularly concerned about the prospect of any presence of a PRC-based company in their community, particularly with their ties to the CCP; their direct engagement with foreign agents of Gotion; lack of answers to specific questions, or shifting answers to other questions; the presence the project has which is considered to raise several flags with the criteria the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) has when weighing the national security threat of a foreign investment; and certainly with last year's now-declassified warning from The National Counterintelligence and Security Center.

Parties involved with the project who may very well be required to register under FARA on account of their direct agreements and engagements with either foreign principals of Gotion, Inc., its parent company, Guoxuan High-Tech Co., Ltd, or its holding company, Nanjing Gotion Holding Group Co. Ltd., are as follows:

Quentin L. Messer, Jr., CEO, Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)
Jen Nelson, Chief Operating & Customer Experience Officer, MEDC
Austin Girelli, Deputy Legislative Director, Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin
Randy Thelen, President & CEO, The Right Place
Chuck Thelen, Vice President of North American Operations, Gotion, Inc.
Bill Pink, President, Ferris State University; Executive Committee Member, MEDC
David Eisler, Former President, Ferris State University
Paul Bullock, Mecosta County Controller/Administrator
Mark Gifford, Big Rapids City Manager
Bill Stanek, Supervisor, Big Rapids Charter Township
Jim Chapman, Green Township Supervisor

Other State of Michigan elected and appointed officials in the executive and legislative branches, along with county officials who are parties to the project as they are covered by NDAs might also be required to register.

Due diligence, strict scrutiny and transparency have been woefully lacking with this project, and the confidentiality has been justified by these parties on account of "competition" and the concern with NDAs is dismissed because they are "commonplace" with such economic developments in the United States.

The engagements by Gotion is the latest attempt of subnational incursions of the United States by the PRC and CCP. State and local governments cannot be sovereign entities when it comes to our national security, particularly considering the specific direction from our intelligence agencies who recommend against even signing such agreements.

We also believe similar questions need to be raised with respect to Ningde, China-based Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL) which is seeking to have a presence in a Ford Motor Company lithium-ion phosphate battery plant in Calhoun County, Michigan through technology licensed to the Ford Motor Company and provision of CATL contractors or consultants within the plant.

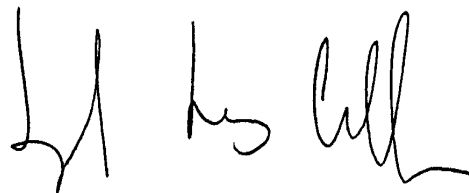
Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Hoekstra". The letters are fluid and connected, with a large initial "P".

Peter Hoekstra
Principal Advisor

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joseph Cella". The signature is more compact and stylized than the one to its left.

Joseph Cella
Director