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EIA-860 Owner vs Operator: A Power Asset Crosswalk for PE

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Published by Docket · 2026-10-31 · eia-860 owner vs operator · eia-860 ownership data · eia form 860 schedule 4 · eia-860 utility id · power plant owner research · eia-860m monthly inventory · plant owner crosswalk · private equity energy origination · generator ownership shares

Original article: https://docket.capital/articles/eia-860-owner-vs-operator-crosswalk



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Executive Summary

A reported power plant does not map cleanly to a single company. In the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) Form EIA-860 data, the unit of record is the generator, the filer for a jointly owned plant is its operator, and owners appear in a separate file that EIA says covers "shared ownership" and generators "wholly-owned by an entity other than the operator" ((www.eia.gov)). This report treats that structure as a join problem for private-equity origination teams that must decide whether a plant, a generator, an operator and an owner are the same company, different companies, several co-owners, or an unresolved corporate family.

The key rules are short. Jointly owned plants are reported only once, by their operator or planned operator (docs.catalyst.coop). Generators missing from the Owner file are read as wholly owned by their operator (docs.catalyst.coop), which is a within-dataset convention and not a verified legal title. Where owners are listed, shares are kept at generator level and never flattened to the plant, because the Owner file carries a share for each owner of each generator (docs.catalyst.coop).

Vintage control is the second rule. Final 2025 annual data were released on September 10, 2026 (www.eia.gov), while the monthly inventory states that its estimates are corrected without specific acknowledgment in later months (www.eia.gov). Snapshots should be preserved and compared through a dated change log, never overwritten.

The third rule is that names are not entities. There is no official crosswalk between the FERC and EIA identifier systems (docs.catalyst.coop), so resolution to legal entities and parents needs dated external evidence. Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation (GLEIF) parent links exist only where relationship data can be made public (www.gleif.org), US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Exhibit 21 lists registrant subsidiaries but may omit smaller ones (www.ecfr.gov), and state registries such as Delaware's do not hold owner information (corp.delaware.gov). Conflicts should stay open, with a decision of eligible target, portfolio or affiliate link, or open question.

This report supplies a reconciliation table schema, fictional worked examples and a capacity calculation. It does not convert capacity to revenue, valuation or legal title opinions, and column names should be confirmed against the Layout file in the downloaded zip before a loader is built.

Introduction and Background

The search query "eia-860 owner vs operator" is mostly a source-navigation query, and the official dataset pages answer the navigation part. What they do not provide is the interpretation layer that an origination analyst needs: when a plant appears in a dataset, which company is the counterparty, which company holds the economic interest, and which parent group sits above them? This report supplies that layer for US power-generation assets. It uses fictional examples only and does not name, rank or evaluate any real acquisition target.

The question matters because the survey was designed to collect equipment data, not to document corporate control. Form EIA-860 covers plants "with 1 megawatt or greater of combined nameplate capacity" (www.eia.gov). PUDL, the open data project run by the Catalyst Cooperative, describes the form as collecting "utility, owner, plant, and generator-level data" (docs.catalyst.coop). A record that names a company is therefore evidence of a reporting relationship, and the nature of that relationship must be read from the file structure.

Docket is a deal-origination and evidence-backed acquisition target research service for private-equity firms, and its analysts face this join whenever a mandate specifies generation assets. The perspective in this report is that of a research practitioner: dated sources, preserved conflicts and explicit decision rules. Nothing here is legal advice, a title opinion or a valuation. Questions of legal title, change of control and regulatory approvals belong with qualified counsel and the transaction record.

The report follows the order in which an analyst works. It defines the units, walks the annual release and its Owner file, sets out the join method, compares annual and monthly vintages, describes entity resolution, quantifies the landscape, applies the method to fictional examples, and closes with a decision framework and answers to common questions.

Defining the Units: Respondent, Plant, Generator, Operator, Owner and Parent

Six terms are routinely conflated. *Table 1* below separates them by the identifier that anchors each and by what the term does not establish.

Unit	Anchor and where it lives	What it establishes	What it does not establish
Respondent (utility)	A Utility ID in the Utility file.	Who filed or is named in the survey.	Who owns the equipment. A respondent may be an owner, operator or asset manager.

Unit	Anchor and where it lives	What it establishes	What it does not establish
Plant	A six-digit Plant ID, also called an ORISPL (docs.catalyst.coop).	A site with one or more generators, treated by PUDL as co-located generation assets (docs.catalyst.coop).	A single owner. A plant can hold generators with different owners.
Generator	A Generator ID, usually numeric but sometimes including letters ((docs.catalyst.coop)).	The unit at which capacity and status are reported.	A company count. Generator IDs repeat across plants.
Operator	The filing party for a jointly owned plant ((docs.catalyst.coop)).	Who ran or will run the plant at reporting time.	Economic interest. An operator may own none of the generators it runs.
Reported owner	An Owner Code and a Percent Owned in Schedule 4.	A named owner and share for a generator.	Ultimate control. The owner is often a project-level company ((www.osti.gov)).
Ultimate corporate parent	Not in EIA-860. Comes from external filings and registries.	A dated claim about control, resolved separately: GLEIF defines the ultimate parent by consolidation (www.gleif.org), and SEC rules define a parent by control (www.ecfr.gov).	Anything inside the EIA files.

The table makes one design choice explicit: the identifier namespace for owners is the same as for utilities. The instructions say the Owner Code is the same as the EIA Utility Identification Code and the EIA Entity Identification Code ((www.eia.gov)), so an owner can be matched to the Utility file by ID where a code was supplied. Records without a code need name-based resolution, which carries more risk.

Why a plant count is not a company count

EIA organizes capacity data by generator, and it warns that its all-sector plant totals "do not necessarily represent unique sites" ((www.eia.gov)). The same logic applies one level up: counting rows in any one file will overstate or understate the number of distinct counterparties. A plant with three generators and four owners yields three generator rows and, in the Owner file, up to twelve owner rows. The count of distinct operators and the count of distinct owners must be computed separately, and each count should carry the vintage and the resolution status of its names.

Operator and owner in sector language

Sector language does not always separate the two roles. The Electric Power Annual describes the producer-type classification as made at the power plant level, so a sector label describes a plant and not the company holding a share. Treat sector labels as screening attributes only. Registration functions show the same separation: NERC registers a Generator Owner and a Generator Operator as distinct functions (www.nerc.com).

The Annual EIA-860 Release: Files, Tabs and Owner Semantics

EIA published final 2025 annual data on September 10, 2026 (www.eia.gov). The detailed data come as a zip that includes a Layout file, which EIA describes as "a directory of all (published) data elements" (www.eia.gov), alongside Utility, Plant, Generator and Owner files. Owner tab column names in this report are drawn from the survey instructions and the PUDL data dictionary, and should be confirmed against the Layout file in the zip before a loader is built.

What the Owner file contains

EIA states that the Owner file "contains owner and/or operator data for generators with shared ownership and generators that are wholly-owned by an entity other than the operator" (www.eia.gov). PUDL's ownership table is sourced from the same schedule and "includes only jointly or third-party owned generators" (docs.catalyst.coop). Two readings follow, and both are within-dataset:

- **Presence in the Owner file** means the generator is either shared or wholly owned by an entity other than the operator. It does not say which.
- **Absence from the Owner file** means the dataset treats the operator as sole owner, and PUDL's tables assume the same ((docs.catalyst.coop)). This is a reporting convention, not an independent legal title finding.
- **Percent Owned** is stored per owner per generator, and PUDL defines its equivalent as the "proportion of generator ownership attributable to this utility" ((docs.catalyst.coop)).

How the survey generates those rows

The instructions assign each generator an ownership code in Schedule 3, including one for generators wholly owned by an entity other than the respondent. Schedule 4 is completed for each operable or planned generator that is jointly owned or wholly owned by another entity ((www.eia.gov)), and the reported percentages must total 100 percent ((www.eia.gov)).

The operator rule drives most of the confusion. For an existing jointly owned plant, "only the operator of that plant should respond" (www.eia.gov), and a jointly owned generator is typically run by a single utility on behalf of its owners (docs.catalyst.coop). Co-owners that are not the operator therefore appear as owner rows and not as separate filers. Equipment status is reported as of December 31 of the reporting year (www.eia.gov), so every annual record is a year-end snapshot and the Owner file inherits that date.

A documentation discrepancy to keep visible

PUDL's data dictionary describes its owner identifier as the owner company "that is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the generator" ((docs.catalyst.coop)), while the same dictionary says jointly owned generators are typically run by one utility on behalf of the owners. The wording is internally ambiguous. The EIA instructions place operation with the operator and ownership shares in Schedule 4, so this report follows EIA and treats the PUDL phrase as a wording issue to verify, not as a competing definition.

Joining Generator, Plant, Owner and Operator: A Reconciliation Method

The method builds a generator-grain table. The grain is deliberate: capacity and status are reported by generator and ownership percentages are reported per generator, so the generator is the lowest level at which share arithmetic is valid.

Step-by-step join

1. **Load and tag the vintage.** Record the data year, release date and file name. Final 2025 annual data were released September 10, 2026.
2. **Key the generators.** Use Plant ID and Generator ID together and store both as text, since generator IDs can include letters.
3. **Attach the operator.** Take the operator from the plant-level reporting entity and confirm the exact column in the Layout file. Use the Utility ID as the anchor and keep the name as a label.
4. **Attach owner rows.** Join the Owner file on Plant ID and Generator ID, keeping one row per owner per generator with its percentage and reporting year.
5. **Apply the absence rule explicitly.** For generators with no Owner row, create a derived owner row equal to the operator at 100 percent, flagged "implied, not reported".
6. **Check the sum.** Reported shares per generator should total 100 percent, and exceptions go to the conflict column.
7. **Resolve names.** Move to the entity-resolution step and keep unresolved names as unresolved.

Identifier hygiene

Cross-dataset keys deserve suspicion. PUDL notes that there is no official FERC to EIA crosswalk and built its own plant and utility IDs by manual mapping (docs.catalyst.coop). Its own cross-year utility identifier "may not be stable over time" (docs.catalyst.coop), so it should not be hard-coded into models. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a power-sector crosswalk that matches key EPA and EIA identifiers assigned to power plants and electric generating units (www.epa.gov). It exists because the datasets are built on different units: EPA's emissions data focus on combustion sources while EIA's focus on electricity generators (www.epa.gov).

The crosswalk matches plant and generator IDs through a plant code (github.com) and a documented match of the CAMD Plant ID and generator ID to the EIA Plant ID (github.com). Its repository notes that Plant IDs "do not match" in rare instances (github.com), and EPA's guidance says facility-level data can usually be matched to other data sets by the plant code (www.epa.gov). Third-party tables may also mix vintages, so the vintage column should be kept even when a secondary source is used.

The reference asset: reconciliation table schema

Table 2 below specifies the columns of the plant-generator-owner-operator reconciliation table. A spreadsheet or database table with these columns is the working asset: an analyst can create it from the schema, populate it from the annual file, and extend it with each external evidence pass.

Column	Source or rule	Why it is kept
plant_id, generator_id	EIA-860 Plant and Generator files, stored as text.	Composite key; generator IDs may carry letters.
data_year, release_vintage	Annual file name and release date, or monthly release date.	Prevents silent overwrites between vintages.
status, capacity_mw	Generator tab, nameplate in MW.	Status is a year-end snapshot.
operator_id, operator_name	Plant-level reporting entity.	Distinct-operator count.
owner_id, owner_name, owner_share_pct	Owner file, Percent Owned.	Share-weighted capacity; distinct-owner count.
implied_operator_owned	Derived: true when no Owner rows exist.	Separates reported from implied ownership.
legal_entity_id	LEI, state file number or other registry ID, with registry name.	Names are not identifiers: LEI data are free to search ((www.gleif.org)) and state files give a file number ((corp.delaware.gov)).
parent_claim, parent_source, claim_date	Filing, registry or announcement, each dated.	Parent evidence is time-bound and may conflict, and GLEIF defines the ultimate parent by consolidation ((www.gleif.org)).
conflict_flag, decision	Free-text conflict; decision from a closed list.	Keeps disagreements visible.

The schema puts the derived "implied operator-owned" flag next to the reported share so a reader never mistakes a convention for a finding. The conflict and decision columns are the interpretive core: they hold the open questions that a lawyer or deal team must close, and they are why the table is more useful than a simple name list.

Annual Versus Monthly Vintages: Preserving Snapshots

EIA's Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory supplements the annual survey and, as of October 31, 2026, shows an October 23, 2026 release ((www.eia.gov)).

What the monthly file is and is not

EIA states that reported capacities "are EIA's preliminary estimates of capacity for that month" (www.eia.gov), and that estimates "will be corrected without specific acknowledgment or explanation in subsequent month's inventory" (www.eia.gov). EIA's data catalog lists "reporting entity" among the monthly fields and lists "ownership" for the annual EIA-860 (www.eia.gov). The monthly file as described by EIA therefore offers no substitute for the Owner file.

A dated change log

Because corrections arrive without notice, the comparison between the final 2025 annual data and a later monthly inventory should be stored as a change log, not as an edit. A workable log has these fields:

- **Compared vintages:** annual final 2025 (released September 10, 2026) and the monthly release being tested, with the release date of each.
- **Key:** Plant ID plus Generator ID.
- **Field changed:** status, capacity, operator name or a planned date.
- **Old and new values:** both retained, never replaced.
- **Observed on:** the date the analyst saw the difference.
- **Interpretation:** correction, real-world change, or unexplained.

The log supports a simple calculation for every verified owner: compute share-weighted capacity from the annual snapshot, recompute it from the monthly capacity where the generator key matches, and report the delta as a flagged difference. Owner shares come only from the annual file, so the monthly capacity is applied to the annual share and the result is labeled preliminary.

Resolving Names to Legal Entities and Parent Groups

Owner and operator names in EIA-860 are free text tied to an ID namespace. They are not legal entity identifiers. The next step is evidence collection from independent registries, each dated, each with a known limit.

Global LEI data

GLEIF publishes the Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) pool, and anyone can "access and search the complete LEI data pool free of charge" (www.gleif.org). Daily Golden Copy files are issued (www.gleif.org). Level 2 data add parent relationships, but only when the parents have obtained their own LEI (www.gleif.org) and only where relationship data can be made public (www.gleif.org). The ultimate accounting consolidating parent is "the highest level legal entity preparing consolidated financial statements" (www.gleif.org). Entities controlled by natural persons, or by entities not subject to consolidation, are reported through exceptions (gleif.org), and an entity is not required to provide non-public parent information (gleif.org). A missing parent link is therefore not evidence of no parent. GLEIF also flags relationship records validated against an explicit statement in key sources (www.gleif.org), a useful field to carry into the table.

Securities filings

For registrants, Exhibit 21 requires a list of "all subsidiaries of the registrant, the state or other jurisdiction of incorporation" (www.ecfr.gov). The list can omit subsidiaries that would not constitute a significant subsidiary (www.ecfr.gov), so a project-level company missing from Exhibit 21 is not evidence that it sits outside the group. SEC Rule 12b-2 defines control as the power to direct or cause the direction of management and policies (www.ecfr.gov) and a parent as an affiliate controlling a person directly or through intermediaries (www.ecfr.gov), which is wider than a majority-equity test. Acquisition announcements surface in Form 8-K Item 2.01, "Completion of Acquisition or Disposition of Assets" (www.sec.gov).

Federal energy regulator filings

Several Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) sources carry dated company names:

- **Exempt wholesale generator (EWG) notices:** most filings are self-certifications deemed granted if FERC "takes no action" within 60 days ((www.ferc.gov)), and a monthly notice lists the dockets whose period expired ((www.ferc.gov)).
- **Qualifying facility (QF) Form 556:** an "owner or operator" of a generating facility files it (www.ferc.gov), findable by docket number in eLibrary (www.ferc.gov). FERC will not treat an ownership change as a change in material facts below a threshold (www.ferc.gov), so Form 556 ownership can lag.
- **Section 203 transactions:** a public utility needs a Commission order before disposing of jurisdictional facilities above a value threshold, merging or consolidating them, acquiring securities of another public utility above a value threshold, or acquiring an existing generation facility that meets the statute's value and jurisdiction conditions (www.ferc.gov; 16 U.S.C. § 824b). Counsel should confirm which trigger applies.
- **Electric Quarterly Reports (EQR):** seller-provided summaries of contract terms (www.ferc.gov), tied to a Company Unique Identifier (www.ferc.gov). Seller names can change while contract dates stay unchanged (www.ferc.gov).
- **eLibrary:** the dated archive of Commission documents from 1989 onward ((www.ferc.gov)).

Reliability registrations

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) registers separate functions for the Generator Owner, which "owns and maintains generating Facility" resources (www.nerc.com), and the Generator Operator, which "operates generating Facility" resources (www.nerc.com). Registered entities appear on the NERC Compliance Registry (www.nerc.com), and a name change can be filed under an existing NCR ID (www.nerc.com), which makes the NCR ID a steadier key than a name. The registry shows functions, not shareholders.

State business registries

Delaware's free search returns "the entity name, file number, incorporation/formation date, registered agent name, address and phone number" (corp.delaware.gov). It returns active and inactive entities and "does not provide entity status" (corp.delaware.gov). Shareholder and owner information "is not on file with the Division of Corporations" (corp.delaware.gov), and alternative entities such as limited liability companies "are not required to list members and/or managers" (corp.delaware.gov). Texas's portal charges a per-search fee, stated as $1.00 as of October 31, 2026 (www.sos.state.tx.us). A state registry can confirm that an entity exists and give its file number. It does not resolve a parent.

Project finance practice explains why the chain is long. A Department of Energy-funded Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory paper describes a "special-purpose project company set up to house the" project assets ((www.osti.gov)) and notes that financing structures allocate federal tax incentives "to those entities that can use them most" efficiently ((www.osti.gov)). Owner names are therefore frequently project-level companies, with the parent group two or three layers up.

Data Analysis and Evidence

This section collects the quantitative anchors and the calculations. EIA values are as published; computed ratios are this report's arithmetic and are labeled as such.

Scale of the generator inventory

In Electric Power Annual Table 4.4 for 2025, the all-sector utility-scale total reads 27,918 generators and 1,376,742.0 MW of nameplate capacity ((www.eia.gov)). The rows give electric utilities 690,422.7 MW, independent power producers (IPPs) excluding combined heat and power 620,702.3 MW and IPP combined heat and power plants 28,866.5 MW, in the Generator Nameplate Capacity column (MW) of EIA's Table 4.4. On that basis, electric utilities hold about 50.1% and IPPs including combined heat and power about 47.2% of utility-scale nameplate capacity, computed here and not stated by EIA.

Additions are large: developers planned 86 GW of utility-scale additions for 2026, a record if realized ((www.eia.gov)). Fast-moving additions raise the stakes on vintage control, because plants change status and owners between the annual snapshot and the monthly view.

Shared ownership is material

EIA found that about 14% of the 1,099 GW of operational US capacity was jointly owned in its 2019 analysis ((www.eia.gov)). The figure is dated and should not be read as a current share. Outside capital adds another layer: an NBER working paper using ownership data finds that private equity, institutional investors and foreign corporations own 58% of wind, 47% of solar and 34% of natural gas generation ((ideas.repec.org)). This is academic evidence and its classification of owners is the authors', not EIA's. It does support the premise that operator and parent resolution matter to the origination task.

The share-weighted capacity calculation

For each verified owner, the calculation is:

- **Owned MW** equals the sum, over generators, of nameplate MW multiplied by the owner's Percent Owned divided by 100.
- **Distinct operators** equals the count of distinct resolved operator entities in scope, computed after merging aliases.
- **Distinct owners** equals the count of distinct resolved owner entities, computed separately from operators.
- **Annual-to-monthly delta** equals monthly capacity minus annual capacity on the same key, logged with both release dates.

The result is capacity exposure by named owner. It is not revenue or enterprise value, and nothing in these data supports converting it into either.

Case Studies and Real-World Examples: Two Fictional Plants (Hypothetical Example)

All names, IDs and capacities in this section are invented for illustration and match no real asset or company. They demonstrate the join and the decision labels.

Hypothetical Example 1: a jointly owned facility

"Harbor Mesa Combined Cycle" (fictional Plant ID 900001) has three generators: CT1 at 200 MW, CT2 at 200 MW and ST1 at 250 MW, so 650 MW in total. "Mesa Operating Co." files as operator. The Owner file lists three owners: Owner A, Owner B and Owner C. On CT1 and CT2 the shares are 50, 30 and 20 percent. On ST1 they are 40, 40 and 20 percent.

The share-weighted capacity is Owner A 300 MW, Owner B 220 MW and Owner C 130 MW, which sum to the 650 MW plant total. A plant-level shortcut that assigned the plant to its operator would attribute all 650 MW to Mesa Operating Co., and one that applied the CT shares to the whole plant would misstate ST1. Distinct operators: one. Distinct owners: three. A fictional registry check finds that Mesa Operating Co. lists Owner A as its parent in one source dated earlier in the year, while a later transaction announcement describes a different parent. The conflict is recorded and left unresolved.

Hypothetical Example 2: an operator with no direct generator ownership

"Prairie Wind Project" (fictional Plant ID 900002) has 40 generators totaling 120 MW. "Prairie Wind Operations LLC" is the operator. Every generator has an Owner row at 100 percent for "Prairie Wind Holdco LLC". Because the generators are wholly owned by an entity other than the operator, the Owner file is where the dataset would place them, and the operator's owned capacity is 0 MW. The holding company, not the operator, is the entity to resolve toward a parent. Counting the two plants together gives two distinct operators and four distinct owners, and neither count equals the two plants in scope.

Table 3 below shows how the fictional rows would fill the reference table, with the decision column applied.

Plant / generator	Status, MW	Operator	Owner and share	Implied operator-owned	Registry and parent claim (dated, fictional)	Conflict	Decision
900001 / CT1	OP, 200	Mesa Operating Co.	Owner A 50%; Owner B 30%; Owner C 20%	No	Fictional file numbers; parent claim A, source dated earlier in year	Operator parent differs between two dated sources	**Open question** for the operator link; **portfolio or affiliate link** for the owners
900001 / ST1	OP, 250	Mesa Operating Co.	Owner A 40%; Owner B 40%; Owner C 20%	No	As above	As above	**Open question**

Plant / generator	Status, MW	Operator	Owner and share	Implied operator-owned	Registry and parent claim (dated, fictional)	Conflict	Decision
900002 / W1 to W40	OP, 120 total	Prairie Wind Operations LLC	Prairie Wind Holdco LLC 100%	No	Holdco parent claim from a fictional group filing	None found	**Portfolio or affiliate link** until counsel confirms control
Example generator with no Owner row	OP, 50	Example Operator Inc.	None reported; implied 100% operator	Yes	Operator parent from a fictional LEI record	None	**Eligible target** for further review, subject to title review

The table shows why the decision column cannot be inferred from the EIA files. Three of the four rows rest on parent evidence outside EIA, and the row marked eligible target depends on an implied owner that the dataset presumes and does not prove. The result is a worklist, with legal confirmation steps reserved for counsel.

Decision Framework: Eligible Target, Portfolio or Affiliate Link, Open Question

The three decision labels separate asset exposure from company acquirability. A generator can be clearly identified while the company that holds it is not a candidate for acquisition, for example because it is a subsidiary of a listed parent or a project company inside a larger platform.

Decision rules

- **Eligible target:** the owner entity resolves to a legal entity with a registry ID ((corp.delaware.gov)), the parent claim is dated and consistent across at least two independent sources, and share-weighted capacity falls within the mandate. Eligibility means eligible for further review, not available for sale.
- **Portfolio or affiliate link:** the owner is a project company or subsidiary whose parent claim is supported. The record is linked to the parent group and examined at group level.
- **Open question:** sources conflict, a parent link is missing, the owner code was not supplied, or the shares do not sum to 100 percent. A missing LEI parent link is not itself evidence of independence ((gleif.org)).

Evidence discipline

- **Date every claim.** Parent evidence ages: Form 556 ownership may lag changes ((www.ferc.gov)), and GLEIF relationship data collection began only in May 2017 ((www.gleif.org)).
- **Keep conflicts unresolved.** Record both claims with source and date and decide only when a primary document settles it.
- **Separate the three questions.** Who operates, who owns and who controls are three answers, each with its own evidence: NERC registers the owner and operator functions separately (www.nerc.com), and SEC control tests are wider than equity ownership ((www.ecfr.gov)).

- **Escalate legal questions.** Title, change of control and regulatory approvals need counsel. A Section 203 order, for example, is an event in the transaction record ((www.ferc.gov)) and not something the EIA files can reveal.
- **Reuse is not validation.** EPA's crosswalk matches EIA and EPA identifiers ((www.epa.gov)), and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's utility-scale solar report draws on EIA data among diverse sources ((emp.lbl.gov)), but neither validates owner names.

Implications and Future Directions

For research operations leads, the central implication is that the generator-level table is the durable asset. Sector labels, plant counts and name lists age quickly. A table keyed by Plant ID and Generator ID, versioned by release, with resolved entities and dated parent claims, can be refreshed each year when the final annual file arrives and checked monthly against the preliminary inventory without losing history.

Three developments will shape how useful the approach remains. First, the pace of additions means more project-level owners: with the record additions planned for 2026 noted above, the proportion of owners that are new special-purpose companies may rise, although the data cited here do not measure owner-entity composition, which raises the value of parent resolution. Second, LEI relationship coverage remains partial, because parent links appear only where they can be made public ((www.gleif.org)), so analysts should expect gaps and plan manual evidence passes. Third, identifier crosswalks are maintained by different bodies, and the mapping risks flagged by EPA ((github.com)) argue for storing every join key and its source.

There are limits to this report. It reflects sources as of October 31, 2026, and column-level statements should be confirmed against the Layout file in the EIA zip. No claim here establishes legal title, valuation or sale availability. The reference table is a research instrument, and a legal and commercial review is required before any outreach or transaction step.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the difference between an EIA-860 operator and owner?

The operator is the party that files for a jointly owned plant ((docs.catalyst.coop)). Owners are the parties holding a share of a generator, reported with a Percent Owned ((docs.catalyst.coop)). An operator can own all, part or none of the generators it runs.

Where is EIA-860 ownership data, and what is Schedule 4?

In the Owner file of the annual zip ((docs.catalyst.coop)). Schedule 4 is the owner schedule behind it. The monthly inventory is not a substitute, as described in the vintage section above.

What does it mean when a generator is not in the Owner file?

Within the dataset, it is treated as wholly owned by its operator ((docs.catalyst.coop)). This is a reporting convention and should be flagged as implied.

How do I find a power plant owner in EIA-860?

Find the plant and generator keys in the Plant and Generator files, check the Owner file for rows on those keys, and read the operator from the plant-level reporting entity. Then resolve names with the registries described above, remembering that certain acquisitions of existing generation facilities by public utilities, and certain securities acquisitions or mergers involving utilities or their holding companies, can require FERC Section 203 authorization, and confirming applicability with counsel (www.ferc.gov).

What are the utility ID, owner ID and operator ID?

The Owner Code is the same as the EIA Utility Identification Code and EIA Entity Identification Code ((www.eia.gov)). A separate operator ID namespace is not described in the sources cited here, so operator identification uses the Utility ID of the operating entity; confirm the column in the Layout file.

How do I resolve an owner name to a legal entity and parent?

Start with the registry that issues identifiers: GLEIF for LEIs (www.gleif.org) and the state file for existence (corp.delaware.gov). Then look for the parent in consolidated reporting, since the ultimate accounting consolidating parent is the highest-level entity preparing consolidated statements (www.gleif.org), and check subsidiary lists (www.ecfr.gov). Date each claim and keep conflicts open, since parent links appear only where they can be made public (www.gleif.org).

Is there a plant owner crosswalk?

EPA publishes a crosswalk that matches EPA and EIA plant and generating unit identifiers ((www.epa.gov)), and PUDL builds its own plant and utility IDs. Neither resolves owners to ultimate parents, which requires the dated external evidence described above.

How can this support private-equity origination and target identification?

The EIA files identify assets and reporting parties. Combined with registry evidence, the reconciliation table sorts records into eligible target, portfolio or affiliate link, and open question. Asset exposure is not company acquirability, and legal confirmation remains outside the dataset.

Conclusion

The EIA-860 owner and operator fields answer different questions, and the Owner file answers them only for generators with shared ownership or ownership by a party other than the operator. The practical method is to work at generator grain, retain ownership shares and the reporting year, treat the absence rule as an implied flag, and keep annual and monthly vintages in separate, dated snapshots.

Names must then be resolved through independent evidence: GLEIF relationships where they exist, securities filings, federal energy filings, reliability registrations and state registries, each with a date and a known limit. Where those sources disagree, the disagreement belongs in the table. The decision labels of eligible target, portfolio or affiliate link, and open question keep asset exposure separate from company acquirability, and legal title, valuation and sale availability stay outside the scope of the dataset and of this report.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://www.eia.gov/electricity/data/eia860
2. https://docs.catalyst.coop/pudl/en/stable/data_sources/eia860.html
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