

Chinese-Owned Company Forges Ahead with US Lithium Mine in Former Supervolcano

By [Sputnik](#)

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A Canadian company, whose major shareholder is a Chinese firm, plans to move ahead with plans for a huge mine in Nevada to produce lithium for electric batteries. Sputnik looks at the significance of the Thacker Pass project.

The demand for lithium is rising rapidly as the demand for electric and hybrid vehicles, cellphones, tablets and other battery-powered devices grows exponentially.

Most of the raw material used to make the lithium-ion batteries currently comes from mines in Australia and Chile.

Lithium has been discovered in [Bolivia](#) and Russia has expressed an interest in exploiting it but the discovery in northern Nevada would be the first major discovery in North America.

Announcement Welcomed on Wall Street

Lithium Americas Corporation's announcement of the discovery at Thacker Pass was considered so significant that the company's chairman, George Ireland, was given the honor of ring the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange on Thursday, June 21.

Tests carried out by a Chinese company suggest the Thacker Pass mine in northern Nevada could produce 60,000 tonnes a year of battery-grade lithium carbonate.

An epic day celebrating the [\\$LAC](#) Thacker Pass PFS announcement and the ringing of the closing bell on Wall Street. Future, here we come! [#lithium](#) [#lithiumamericas](#) [#thackerpass](#) [#criticalminerals](#) [#electriccars](#) pic.twitter.com/LPbGnSg7tU

— Tom Benson (@thomasrbenson) [June 22, 2018](#)

But getting it out of the ground will not be easy.

Lithium Americas Corporation, which is based in Vancouver, said a new extraction technique would be used to filter the lithium out of the clay in which it sits.

Its biggest shareholder is Ganfeng Lithium, which said it had invented a process which creates battery-grade lithium from the extracted material within 24 hours.

Thacker Pass lithium project is 100% owned by Lithium Nevada Corp., a wholly owned subsidiary of Lithium Americas, demonstrates a design capacity of 60,000 tpa of battery grade lithium carbonate with initial production capacity of 30,000 tpa and increasing to 60,000 tpa

— Mehrdad Yousefi (@MY21_Oracle) [June 22, 2018](#)

Lithium Americas says over the projected 46 year life of the mine it estimated 509 million tonnes of material would be dug up, 179 million of which would be lithium ore, which would be delivered to a factory where it will be processed.

The firm said the US\$1.7 billion project would create 800 well-paid construction jobs and the open-cast mine would employ 292 people.

Globe Being Scoured For Lithium

Scientists and industrialists are scouring the globe searching for new sources of lithium.

[Supervolcanoes](#) can produce massive eruptions of hundreds to thousands of cubic kilometers of magma — 10,000 times more than a normal volcano. They produce vast quantities of volcanic ash and pumice which is spread over wide areas.

The former supervolcano leaves a tell-tale crater, known as a caldera. One of the best examples is Crater Lake in Oregon.

But what was not known until now is that these calderas are also home to vast quantities of lithium.

Today we celebrate with Lithium Americas Corp. as they launch the Thacker Pass Project in Nevada <https://t.co/lzpGGdldhg> [pic.twitter.com/rhMWmz4R2m](https://t.co/rhMWmz4R2m)

— Bob Googli (@googli_bob) [June 22, 2018](#)

While researching his PhD on the Yellowstone “hotspot”, Tom Benson mapped the entire geological area and realized there were large amounts of lithium in the McDermitt caldera, on the border of Nevada and Oregon.

Thacker Pass is located in the [McDermitt caldera](#), only 20 miles from the Oregon border.

“With the experience of our team and leveraging our strong partner relationships, we plan to rapidly advance this scalable project to become the leading source of lithium production in the USA,” said **Alexi Zawadzki**, Lithium Americas’ President of North American Operations.

“Thacker Pass is an important complement to our Cauchari-Olaroz lithium joint venture currently under construction in Jujuy, Argentina,” said **Tom Hodgson**, CEO of Lithium Americas.

“As a large US-based lithium project with strong economics, we expect Thacker Pass to attract significant strategic partnership opportunities to accelerate the path to production,” he added.

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