THE CRITICAL ISSUE #8

FEBRUARY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Critical Minerals Association USA

FEBRUARY 2024 ISSUE OVERVIEW

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ASSOCIATION UPDATES

We are delighted to announce the expansion of the Critical Minerals Association USA (CMA USA) team. We are honoured to welcome industry champions - Dennis Gibson as Chairman, and Thomas Hale as Director of Public Affairs.

The CMA USA looks forward to a bright yet busy year ahead as we continue to serve our members and industry, focusing on dismantling barriers to made in America supply chains.

This year CMA USA will focus on:

- Building and increasing engagement with USA stakeholders to forge meaningful partnerships and encourage collaboration;
- Tackling barriers to building sovereign supply chains including investment, approvals and permitting, workforce availability, and public perceptions;
- Bringing industry, academia, and policymakers together to find pragmatic solutions and protect the USA from market manipulations.

Read on here.

Jeff Townsend is excited to be attending and speaking at Mines & Money Miami.

Jeff will be participating in the keynote panel on ‘how vertical integration in the critical mineral supply chain is reshaping the geopolitics of mining’ alongside Duncan Wood of The Wilson Centre, Amanda Van Dyke of ARCH Emerging Markets Partners, Erez Ichilov of Traxys and Michael Fox of Prospector News.

Register to attend here.

We look forward to connecting with those of you in attendance!

POLITICAL & GEOPOLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS

US electric vehicle policy likely to give free trade agreement nations a lift

Battery metal-producing nations that hold free trade agreements with the US are poised for a trade boost from the country's efforts to shift to electric vehicles, analysts and industry observers told S&P Global Commodity Insights.

Read on here...

What to expect from China's economy in 2024?

[...] Of particular relevance to commodities, the property market continued to suffer in 2023, with investment in the sector falling 9.6% year-on-year. Property sales by floor area fell 8.5% year-on-year and construction starts were 20.5% lower. This is despite the loose monetary policy implemented by China’s Central Bank (PBOC). Exports were another weak spot with a 4.6% y-o-y decline due to a subdued global economy coupled with rising trade barriers.

Read on here...

Pentagon plans AI-based program to estimate prices for critical minerals

The U.S. Department of Defense plans to develop a program to estimate prices and predict supplies of nickel, cobalt and other critical minerals, a move aimed at boosting market transparency but one that throws a new, uncertain variable into global metals markets.

Read on here...

India, US working on tech to process critical minerals

India and the US are working on a collaboration mechanism to jointly develop technologies to process critical minerals. If the deal goes through, it will be in addition to the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), a grouping of 14 nations including the European Union.

Read on here...

Congo and China talking $7 billion in finance, Tshisekedi says

China and Democratic Republic of Congo are discussing $7 billion in financing as part of a renegotiated minerals-for-infrastructure deal, President Felix Tshisekedi said Saturday at his second inaugural address in the capital, Kinshasa.

Tshisekedi has been pushing for a restructuring of a 2008 $6.2 billion contract between the countries, which he says has provided little benefit to Congo. The original deal promised $3 billion in infrastructure projects paid for by proceeds from a copper and cobalt mine known as Sicomines.

[...] Tshisekedi said a new infrastructure initiative to open up the enormous country would be financed “thanks to the upcoming allocation of funds from the envelope obtained as part of the renegotiation of the Sicomines project and which should reach a total amount of $7 billion.” He did not offer further details.

Read on here...

EU trade chief to press on with US battery minerals talks despite differences

The US and European Union failed to reach a trade deal for critical battery minerals but are vowing to press ahead with talks to create a transtlantic marketplace for minerals and other components, the EU's top trade official said.

European Commission executive VP Valdis Dombrovskis told reporters after bilateral talks in Washington that there remain some "outstanding issues" on the European side, including aspects of the US green energy subsidy law known as the Inflation Reduction Act that the EU sees as discriminatory.

Read on here...

US Supreme Court maintains veto on Alaskan Pebble project

Canadian mineral exploration and development company Northern Dynasty Minerals has reported that the US Supreme Court has denied Alaska’s petition to review its claims that the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) veto of the Pebble project was illegal.

Read on here...

INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Fortescue partners with Michigan to set up Detroit battery plant

MEDC announced that the Michigan Strategic Fund (MSF) had approved support and incentives for Fortescue to establish a US advanced manufacturing center, which will be a major hub for its automotive and heavy industry batteries, fast chargers and electrolysers.

Read on here...

Syrah's Louisiana facility to start production before month-end

Syrah Resources has reported a slight delay in the production of active anode material (AAM) at its 11 250 t/y Vidalia facility, in Louisiana, but expects the plant to start production before month-end.

The company, which owns the Balama graphite mine in Mozambique, reports that commissioning processes at Vidalia are well advanced or complete across all parts of the facility.

Read on here...

How one mine could unlock billions in electric vehicle subsidies

Beneath these capped drill holes, Talon Metals has uncovered one of America's densest nickel deposits—and now it wants to begin tunneling deep into the rock to extract hundreds of thousands of metric tons of mineral-rich ore a year.

If regulators approve the mine, it could mark the starting point in what this mining exploration company claims would become the country's first complete domestic nickel supply chain, running from the bedrock beneath the Minnesota earth to the batteries in electric vehicles across the nation.

Read on here...

Nevada Sunrise's Gemini emerges as one of largest U.S. lithium resources

[...] In total, there were approximately 1.3 million tonnes of lithium (or 7.1 million tonnes of lithium carbonate equivalent) contained within 1.2 billion tonnes of mineralized clay at an average lithium grade of approximately 1,130 parts per million.

This open pit resource, as Nevada Sunrise CEO Warren Stanyer says, has "exceeded expectations" given that only five holes have been drilled to date in just 15% of the project area.

Read on here...

INTERNATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Anglo launches battery raw materials research project with large China recycler

Anglo American on Friday announced the launch of a research and development project in collaboration with one of China’s largest battery and battery material recyclers.

The purpose of the project with Shenzhen-based GEM is to explore new and more efficient technologies for the use of existing and alternative raw materials deployed in batteries for battery electric vehicles.

Read on here...

Defense Metals, Ucore sign MoU for collaboration on REE supply chain

[...] As one of the first projects under this MoU, Defense Metals will ship a mixed rare earth carbonate sample from its Wicheeda REE project to Ucore’s Kingston, Ontario, rapid commercialisation and demonstration facility (CDF).

Read on here...

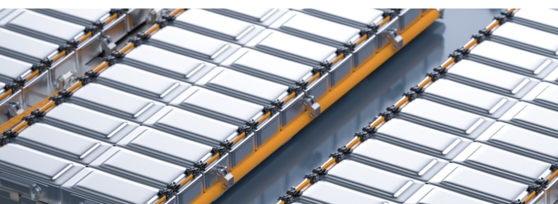
China’s Zijin plans stake in Canadian miner, testing security rules

Zijin Mining Group plans to take a 15% stake in Canadian copper company Solaris Resources Inc., testing Canada’s national security rules following a recent crackdown on foreign ownership.

Vancouver-based Solaris, which explores for mineral deposits in the Americas, said Thursday that the $130-million investment would be used to advance a copper project in Ecuador. It would also give Zijin a seat on Solaris’ board of directors.

The proposed deal, which will be subject to a national security review by the Canadian government, follows tougher rules on investments by foreign state-owned entities in the country’s critical minerals sector.

Read on here...



Nickel prices keep slumping even as mines close

Nickel continued its slump, heading toward the lowest level in more than three years, even as the collapse in prices for the metal force mines to shutter.

The metal used in stainless steel and electric-vehicle batteries is down more than 40% from a year ago amid a growing global glut. The market has been flooded with a wave of new material from top producer Indonesia at a time when demand growth has faded.

Read on here...

Russia’s Udokan Copper assesses damage after fire

A fire at the operations of Russian miner Udokan Copper on Dec. 30 damaged part of the plant in Russia’s far east but left copper concentrate production unaffected, the company told Reuters, adding that it was still assessing the damage.

Udokan Copper declined to comment on whether the damage would delay the start of copper cathode production at the plant.

Read on here...

New platinum group metals recycling facility opens in China

A new platinum group metals (PGM) recycling facility has opened in China, where the autocatalyst recycling market is expected to grow at the rate of 18% a year.

[...] The new BASF HERAEUS Metal Resource recycling facility in Pinghu, China, has been jointly built by BASF EnvironmentalCatalyst & Metal Solutions and Heraeus Precious Metals. The joint venture (JV) investment is part of a global €300-million recycling expansion programme spanning China.

Read on here...

Chinese miner takes Glencore's cobalt crown as output jumps 170%

China’s CMOC Group boosted its cobalt output by more than 170% last year, with surging production at a new mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo helping the company leapfrog Glencore as the world’s top producer of the key battery metal.

Read on here...

CONFERENCE CALENDAR 2024

FEBRUARY

5 - 8 Feb
Cape Town, South Africa

22 - 23 Feb
Miami, USA

MARCH

3 - 6 Mar
Toronto, Canada

MAY

3 - 6 Mar
Pasadena, USA

JUNE

11 - 12 Jun
Washington DC, USA

23 - 26 Jun
Maryland, USA

SEPTEMBER

26 - 27 Sept
London, UK

OCTOBER

29 - 31 Oct
Sydney, Australia

DECEMBER

3 - 5 Dec
London, UK

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