

ioneer's Rhyolite Ridge lithium-boron project achieves major permitting milestone

Posted by Daniel Gleeson on 24th June 2021



ioneer Ltd, a lithium-boron project developer, has confirmed the issuance of a Class II Air Quality Permit for its Rhyolite Ridge project in Nevada, USA.

The issuance of the Air Quality Permit follows a detailed review of the project by the State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection Bureau of Air Pollution Control and is a requirement for construction to commence at Rhyolite Ridge.

The project will comprise a quarry, an overburden storage facility, the first sulphuric acid plant permitted in the State of Nevada, an ore processing facility responsible for boric acid and lithium carbonate production, and a spent ore storage facility.

The project's acid plant features MECS®/SNC Lavalin designed heat recovery technology, which means the plant will generate all the electricity and heat needed for normal operations, according to iioneer. This means the operation will be energy-independent and using co-generated zero-carbon power. The acid plant features state-of-the-art controls that limit emissions to among the lowest in the world for this type of plant, the company claims.

“The facility will not use fossil fuels to generate electricity during normal operations and will not draw power from the electricity grid,” the company said.

ioneer's Managing Director, Bernard Rowe, said: “Our commitment to responsible production is at the core of our operation. The issuance of the Class II Air Quality Permit represents a significant milestone for the Rhyolite Ridge lithium-boron project and supports our detailed plans for a processing plant with low emissions and minimal hazardous air pollutants.

“After regulatory review and public comment period, we are pleased that Rhyolite Ridge is the first project with sulphuric acid production to receive a Class II Air Quality permit in Nevada.”

He added: “As the most advanced lithium development project in the US, we are committed to ensuring Rhyolite Ridge is a sustainable, environmentally sensitive operation that also delivers significant positive economic impact in the state of Nevada. This important step allows us to continue to develop the project and work toward construction.”

The lithium and boron resource at Rhyolite Ridge is estimated at 146.5 Mt, including a reserve of 60 Mt. The company expects to mine and process 63.8 Mt over the 26-year mine life at an average annual rate of 2.5 Mt/y.