

Australian Mining Review

ioneer's Plan of Operations accepted by BLM

31 August 2020

ioneer Ltd (ASX: INR), an emerging lithium–boron supplier, is pleased to announce the Plan of Operations (Plan) for the Company's Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project (Project) in Nevada has been deemed complete and formally accepted by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), marking a major milestone toward the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

The Plan of Operations is the foundational permitting document for the Project and will become the basis for compliance during operations and closure. The Plan represents the main body of work required for permitting and drew on 14 baseline studies that have been completed over a 2-year period.

In accordance with the NEPA process, the Plan will now undergo an environmental review followed by preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Plan will be updated to reflect outcomes from the NEPA analysis before being finalised. As announced by the Company on May 12, 2020, the BLM has contracted Stantec to prepare and complete the Rhyolite Ridge EIS.

The NEPA process culminates in the BLM's Record of Decision (ROD), representing the BLM's final decision on ioneer's application for an approved Plan of Operations. An approved Plan will allow the Company to commence construction at the site. ioneer is targeting being "construction ready" in Q2 of 2021 and is continuing to advance engineering from DFS level (30%) to construction level (50-100%) to meet this objective.

ioneer Ltd Managing Director, Bernard Rowe said: "Completion and acceptance of the Plan of Operations represents a major milestone toward developing the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project. It is the culmination of over 2-years of dedicated work by ioneer and our team of consultants."

"ioneer's mission is to become a responsible and profitable producer of the materials necessary for a sustainable future. Our Project is the only lithium-boron project in North America and one of only two known such deposits in the world. It sits at the very bottom of the global lithium cost curve, and has been engineered to ensure a predictable, sustainable and low-cost source of lithium in the United States, a key component for batteries fueling the electric vehicle revolution. In delivering this world-class project, ioneer will also make a significant positive impact on the economy in the state of Nevada through the creation of 400-500 construction jobs and 200-300 high-paying operating jobs."