

Ioneer and Empire Announce Services Partnership for Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project

January 14, 2026 – Reno, Nevada – Ioneer Ltd. (ASX: INR, Nasdaq: IONR) (Ioneer) and Empire Southwest, LLC (Empire), the Caterpillar dealer serving the service territory of Arizona, Nevada and parts of eastern California, today announced the signing of a Master Service Agreement for sales, services, goods, technology, and equipment rental to support the development and operation of the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project in Nevada. The agreement identifies key initiatives to sustain successful mining operations and creates a formal partnership between the two companies.

Rhyolite Ridge, located in Esmeralda County, approximately halfway between Reno and Las Vegas, hosts the largest undeveloped lithium-boron Ore Reserve in the world outside of Turkey. The project will play a vital role in supplying and processing two critical materials at its on-site facility for re-shoring U.S. manufacturing.

“Partnering with Empire gives Ioneer added support and expertise as we move into an important operational phase in driving U.S. mining innovation, sustainability, and the secure production of lithium and boron – two urgently needed U.S. critical minerals,” said Matt Weaver, Ioneer’s Senior Vice President of Engineering & Operations. “Rhyolite Ridge is a multigenerational deposit and we anticipate this being a multigenerational partnership.”

“We are pleased to partner with Ioneer on the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project, which represents a significant step forward for mining production in the United States,” said Dan Harms, Vice President of Mining at Empire Southwest. “This partnership underscores Empire’s commitment to supporting innovative projects that drive progress, create jobs, and deliver long-term value to our industry and communities.”

The milestone follows Ioneer’s recent announcement which cut a key component of ore processing time in half while increasing annual lithium and boron chemical production by 30% and 15%, respectively, during the first 25 years of operations.

The Rhyolite Ridge project will create hundreds of jobs and generate an estimated \$30 million annually in fiscal revenue for state and local governments. Construction at Rhyolite Ridge is slated to begin in 2026 with commercial operations commencing in 2029.

About Ioneer

Ioneer Ltd. is an emerging lithium–boron producer and the 100% owner of the Rhyolite Ridge Lithium-Boron Project. Rhyolite Ridge is one of only a small number of lithium–boron ore deposits globally and a linchpin project in Nevada’s burgeoning Lithium Loop.

Rhyolite Ridge closed a US\$996 million loan with the U.S. Department of Energy’s Energy Dominance Finance Program in January 2025. In October 2024, Ioneer received the final federal permit for the project from the Bureau of Land Management, concluding the formal federal permitting process which began in early 2020. Ioneer signed separate offtake agreements with Ford Motor Company and Prime Planet & Energy Solutions (joint venture between Toyota and Panasonic) in 2022 and Korea’s EcoPro Innovation in 2021.

To learn more about Ioneer, visit www.ioneer.com/investors or join our online communities on [X](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About Empire Southwest

Empire Southwest is an authorized Cat® dealer for heavy equipment and power systems throughout Arizona, Nevada and Eastern California. In addition, Empire is a provider of Tier 1 commercial solar products and microgrids, an authorized AGCO equipment dealer representing Fendt and Massey Ferguson, an authorized Trimble dealer through SITECH Southwest, and a premiere distributor of Maintainer, Trail King and other leading truck and trailer brands. The third-generation, family-owned company was founded in 1950 and has over 4,100 employees across over 30 locations. Learn more about Empire's products, services, partnerships, and careers at empirecat.com.

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