

## Thacker Pass Mine Fact Sheet

*The future demand for lithium is truly staggering.... Battery demand is rising at the rate of one to two new lithium mines per year, growing to two to three mines per year by 2020.” — Mike Kobler, CEO, American Lithium*

### THE MINE

- Lithium Americas Corp. is a Canadian company. They plan to mine nearly 6,000 acres in Thacker Pass, Nevada, creating an open pit roughly one half mile across and 2.3 miles long, with associated tailings piles and processing facilities.
- Future mine expansions could triple the mine size to over 17,000 acres.
- The Thacker Pass mine would burn around 11,300 gallons of diesel fuel per day for on-site operations, and nearly as much again for off-site operations.
- Carbon emissions from the site would more than 150,000 tons per year (during Phase 2), roughly 2.3 tons of carbon for every ton of lithium that will be produced.
- Lithium is present in the soils here at 2000-9000 ppm (0.2-0.9%). Producing one ton of lithium will require strip mining and processing between 110 and 500 tons of Earth.
- The Thacker Pass mine would cut off access to thousands of acres of public lands, including areas regularly used for hunting and recreation.
- The mine would last at least 41 years, possibly longer. Even if reclamation were completely successful (unlikely), restoration of the site to its current condition — dominated by old-growth sagebrush — would not be complete until at least 2162.

### PROCESSING

- Lithium Americas Corp. plans to build a sulfuric acid plant on site to convert molten sulfur into sulfuric acid to leach the lithium from clay and stone.
- Hundreds of tons of sulfur (ironically, waste from oil refineries) will be trucked in and burned every day at the mine site. This is roughly 75 semi loads of sulfur a day. Locals are concerned about the possibility of accidents and spills.
- Thousands of tons of sulfuric acid will be produced every day. Other harsh chemicals will be used in bulk as well. Following the leaching, the lithium bearing solution would be purified using crystallizers and reagents to produce battery grade  $\text{Li}_2\text{CO}_3$ .

### WATER

- Local residents are concerned about water use. Lithium Americas plans to extract more than 5000 acre-feet (1.7 billion gallons) of water annually from an aquifer in the Quinn River Valley which is already over-allocated by more than 30,000 acre-feet per year.
- It's possible the mine will leach uranium, antimony, sulfuric acid, and other dangerous substances into groundwater.

- The mine could cause local springs to dry up and impact a critically endangered spring snail which only lives in the Thacker Pass area.
- Declines in groundwater levels could cause meadows to become dustbowls and streams home to threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout to become increasingly inhospitable to fish.

## **WILDLIFE**

- Thacker Pass is a critical corridor for wildlife such as pronghorn antelope and mule deer travelling between the Montana and Double H Mountains.
- The Nevada Department of Wildlife has described the proposed mine as having “adverse impacts to wildlife, ground and surface waters, and riparian vegetation within and outside the project area. These impacts include effects to an array of species and will likely have permanent ramifications on the area’s wildlife and habitat resources.”
- This region is the most important greater sage-grouse habitat (the Lone Willow PMU) in Nevada, home to 5-8% of the total global population of sage-grouse.
- Contrary to mining company claims, grouse regularly use and visit the site of the proposed open-pit mine.
- The mine is in the watershed of several creeks that host threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, and nearby springs that are the only home of the King’s River pyrg (an endemic springsnail species).
- Crosby’s Buckwheat, a rare desert wildflower, lives in the project area.
- Golden eagles, ferruginous hawks, prairie falcons, and numerous other bird species nest in the cliffs above the site and regularly hunt among the old-growth sagebrush.
- Much of the Thacker Pass mine site is covered in old-growth big-sagebrush, with individuals over 100 years in age. This type of habitat is increasingly rare across Nevada.

## **CULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS ISSUES**

- Lithium Americas is 49% owner of a South American mining company called Minera Exar which has been accused of misleading and violating principles of free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous communities in the vicinity of their mine in Argentina.
- Local communities are concerned that this mine will similarly disregard human rights and environmental issues.
- The Thacker Pass mine would be built in an area known to have been used by Northern Paiute and Western Shoshone people for many generations.
- There are cultural sites, including obsidian processing areas and potentially burial sites, in the area directly surrounding the proposed mine.
- Impacts to golden eagles are particularly concerning to many tribal members.

**This is not a green project. It is greenwashing and the destruction of a wild, beautiful, and important place. Learn more at <https://ProtectThackerPass.org>.**