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# Advanced Technology for Rapid Extraction Will Be Key to Meeting Future Lithium Demand

POINT ROBERTS, Wash. and DELTA, British Columbia, Feb. 01, 2019 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Investorideas.com, a leading investor news resource covering AI and lithium stocks issues a snapshot looking at lithium companies preparing to meet future demands in the market and how technology innovation may play a lead role.

The future of lithium shows a high demand, though there is uncertainty surrounding whether the market will be able to keep up with extraction demands.

Looking at how this all plays out, Albemarle Corporation ([NYSE:ALB](#)) and Chile state development agency Corfo recently reached a deal to resolve a contract dispute centered around an amendment to the contract that requires Albemarle to provide as much as 25 percent of its annual production of lithium at a discount to companies seeking to produce battery metals within Chile.

Albemarle operates in Chile's Salar de Atacama, a salt flat in the country's northern desert that supplies nearly 40 percent of the world's lithium. Corfo, which leases mining rights in the Salar, had previously threatened to cancel its contract with Albemarle over the dispute, raising the spectre of potential supply disruptions amid booming demand.

The contract amendment that requires Albemarle to provide the ultralight battery metal at a reduced price is meant to spur a value-added lithium industry in Chile.

Albemarle produces most of its lithium from evaporation ponds. In November of 2018, the company's claim to developing a unique process to more than triple its lithium production from Chile's Atacama desert without using more water [drew heavy scrutiny](#). Inside the US, Albemarle has already hinted at the potential of producing lithium to business owners operating near their Magnolia Arkansas operations, which is located nearby to Standard Lithium's potential commercial lithium project.

[Conflicting reports](#) regarding Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway's recent [alleged interest](#) in new US-based lithium extraction technologies has shone a spotlight on a rising need for innovation. Beyond Buffett's group, there has already been a push from the lithium sector to innovate. Despite [lingering doubts](#) about the feasibility of the Berkshire Hathaway project to produce lithium from California geothermal wells, other projects are priming for lithium production from US brines.

Understanding the need [to innovate](#) is Standard Lithium ([TSX.V:SLL](#)) ([OTC:STLHF](#)). Based in Southern Arkansas, with a [planned joint venture](#) involving a multi-billion-dollar global specialty chemical company, they are using innovative proprietary AI-powered rapid extraction technologies. This new high-tech approach may improve chances for success in

this sector.

As international interests such as [Germany and China](#) jostle for position in other places like South America, securing North American lithium deposits is highly sought after domestically. The economic impact could be massive, as Chilean exports alone rose to [\\$949 million in 2018](#).

Through its German partners, global chemical giant LANXESS and Standard Lithium have secured access to billions of gallons of lithium-rich brine; produced annually as a by-product of one of the world's largest bromine producers every year at their flagship project in Southern Arkansas.

Standard Lithium Ltd. ([TSX.V:SLL](#)) ([OTC:STLHF](#)) has the infrastructure and investment potential in place to move forward on a massive operating commercial brine-fueled lithium project in the USA. Should the next stages of the pilot and commercial feasibility testing be a success, [LANXESS has announced a financial commitment](#) to push the project into production.

Livent Corporation ([NYSE:LTHM](#)), focused on South America as well as Australia, calls itself "a world leader in lithium technology." The company also holds 50 product patents.

They also [state](#), "Our control over the entire lithium operations chain-from pumping brine out of the ground to processing it into a range of performance products-enables us to lead the industry in lithium technology."

When discussing the lithium market [in an interview](#), CEO Paul Graves said, "We think demand is going to grow almost five times larger in 2025 than it was in 2017. Our biggest challenge is producing enough to meet the demand - there's a much greater risk that this market is consistently in a deficit in the near future."

Other companies like Nemaska Lithium Inc. ([TSX:NMX](#)) ([OTC:NMKEF](#)), forecasted to be North America's next big lithium producer, is in the construction stage on its Whabouchi mine in the James Bay region of Quebec, Canada. According to the company's feasibility study, the capex on the project is set at approximately \$875 million, of which Nemaska has already spent \$272.4 million.

Nemaska Lithium has developed [proprietary processes](#) that use electrolysis to produce high-purity lithium hydroxide and lithium carbonate for the lithium battery market. The technology virtually eliminates costly soda ash from the process.

The race to innovate in the lithium sector is on. [According to](#) Transparency Market Research, "Key players are focused on the innovation of new technologies in order to gain market share and serve a diverse range of end-user industries."

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