

PRESS RELEASE

Rock Tech Lithium Awarded \$262,500 from Ontario's Critical Minerals Innovation Fund to Advance Made-in-Ontario Lithium Supply Chain

CMIF-supported project with Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper and Queen's University to evaluate locally sourced crude tall oil as a potential flotation reagent for lithium processing

- Ontario's Critical Minerals Innovation Fund has awarded Rock Tech \$262,500 to evaluate and validate the use of locally-sourced crude tall oil, a by-product of Ontario's pulp and paper sector, as a potential flotation reagent for lithium processing, supporting supply chain development and cross-sector collaboration.
- The project will be completed in collaboration with Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper and Queen's University, bringing together Ontario-based industrial supply, critical minerals development and research expertise.
- The project aims to connect Ontario's forestry and critical minerals sectors by creating a potential new market for forestry-derived products in lithium processing.
- The project is intended to evaluate whether locally sourced crude tall oil could support more localized reagent supply, provide data for future technical and economic optimization work and reduce reliance on imported or conventional processing inputs.
- The project is intended to evaluate whether locally sourced crude tall oil could, if successfully validated, support more localized and potentially lower-emission battery and critical minerals supply chains, including supply chains relevant to advanced manufacturing and energy storage applications, support future technical and economic optimization work and reduce reliance on imported or conventional processing inputs.
- The initiative supports Rock Tech's broader Ontario mine-to-converter strategy, including the Georgia Lake Lithium Project and the proposed Red Rock Lithium Converter, strengthening a made-in-Ontario critical minerals supply chain while creating new opportunities across multiple sectors of the provincial economy.
- This marks Rock Tech's second CMIF-supported initiative, following its previously announced ore sorting program, which identified a potential pathway to reduce future crushing and concentrator capital costs by up to 50% based on preliminary

test work on representative Georgia Lake material and subject to further engineering, validation and integration into future technical studies.

- This project will also evaluate further opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce operating costs and strengthen the economics of the Georgia Lake Project.

Toronto, Ontario – July 13, 2026 – Rock Tech Lithium Inc. ("Rock Tech" or the "Company") (TSX-V: RCK) (OTCQX: RCKTF) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded \$262,500 through Ontario's Critical Minerals Innovation Fund ("CMIF") to evaluate the use of crude tall oil, a by-product of Ontario's pulp and paper industry, as potentially locally sourced flotation reagent for lithium processing.

Crude tall oil may have potential application in mineral flotation processes used during processing to separate lithium-bearing minerals from waste rock, with the objective of improving processing efficiency while supporting a more localized supply chain by leveraging a pulp and paper by-product. This by-product produced by Ontario's pulp and paper sector and could serve as a new way for Ontario's pulp and paper industry to monetize this output while enhancing the sustainability and affordability of lithium processing in Ontario, if successfully validated and incorporated into future project design.

Similar to Rock Tech's recently announced completion of its CMIF-supported ore sorting program (refer to Press Release – Rock Tech Advances Georgia Lake Lithium Project, Identifies Potential Pathway to Reduce Processing CAPEX by Up to 50 per cent, dated May 19, 2026), this project is designed to evaluate whether locally sourced crude tall oil could support future processing efficiency, reduce reliance on imported or conventional reagents and inform future cost-optimization work for the Georgia Lake Project.

Strengthening Ontario's Critical Minerals Supply Chain Through Innovation

The project arrives at an important moment for Ontario's critical minerals sector, as the Province of Ontario has identified the development of domestic critical minerals supply chains as a strategic priority, including supply chains supporting advanced manufacturing and energy storage.¹

The use of crude tall oil as a flotation reagent represents an opportunity to connect two strategically important Ontario industries. By evaluating whether a by-product from the province's forestry sector can be utilized in lithium processing, the project seeks to improve the sustainability and competitiveness of domestic critical minerals production while creating additional value from existing industrial supply chains.

¹ <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1007581/ontario-takes-action-to-build-critical-minerals-supply-chain>

"We're proud to have the continued support of the Government of Ontario through this latest intake of the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund," said **Mirco Wojnarowicz, CEO of Rock Tech**. "The future of critical minerals competitiveness will be driven not only by what we mine, but by how we process and innovate. This project brings together Ontario's strengths in critical minerals, forestry, and research to evaluate a practical solution that could reduce emissions, strengthen project economics and create new opportunities for domestic industry. It demonstrates how innovation can help build a more resilient critical minerals supply chain – here in Canada and among allied countries."

Government, Industry, and Research Working Together

With support from the Province of Ontario through the CMIF, Rock Tech and its project partners will evaluate a practical innovation with direct commercial application. The initiative brings together public investment, industrial expertise, and research capacity to explore technologies that may improve competitiveness while supporting the development of cleaner and more efficient processing methods.

"Northwestern Ontario has the people, resources, and expertise needed to lead the next generation of critical mineral development. This investment will help strengthen connections between our mining and forestry sectors while supporting innovation right here in our region," said **Kevin Holland, MPP for Thunder Bay–Atikokan**. "I'm pleased to see Rock Tech, Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper, and Queen's University working together on a project that has the potential to create new opportunities for local industry and strengthen Ontario's critical mineral supply chain. Investments through the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund are helping ensure that the economic benefits of resource development stay in Northern Ontario, creating jobs and supporting long-term growth for our communities."

"This CMIF investment supports an ongoing collaboration between the Critical Minerals Processing Lab at Queen's University and Rock Tech, advancing lithium process development in Ontario." said **Charlotte Gibson, Assistant Professor and Associate Head at Queen's University's Robert M. Buchan Department of Mining**. "We are excited to continue working with Rock Tech on this important initiative, which has the potential to establish local reagent supply chains, improving the sustainability and resilience of lithium production in the province."

The project also highlights the growing opportunity to strengthen ties between Ontario's natural resource sectors. By creating potential new demand for forestry-derived products within critical minerals processing, the initiative will support the province's industrial diversification, domestic supply chains, and economic prosperity.

Supporting Rock Tech's Ontario Mine-to-Converter Strategy

The project forms part of Rock Tech's broader Ontario strategy, which includes the Georgia Lake Project and the proposed Red Rock Converter in Northwestern Ontario.

Together, these projects are intended to support a vertically integrated, made-in-Ontario lithium supply chain linking domestic resource development with downstream processing capacity. As demand for battery materials continues to grow across North America and Europe, including supporting an expanding range of capabilities in the defence sector, innovative initiatives like this may help strengthen the competitiveness, sustainability and long-term resilience of Ontario's critical minerals sector and broader economy.

TECHNICAL DISCLOSURE

The scientific and technical information in this news release has been reviewed and approved by Cameron Andrews, P.Eng., General Manager, Canada for Rock Tech Lithium, a “qualified person” as defined in National Instrument 43-101 – Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects (“**NI 43-101**”).

The project described in this news release is intended to evaluate crude tall oil, a by-product of Ontario's pulp and paper industry, as a potential flotation reagent for lithium processing. No new mineral resource estimate, mineral reserve estimate, metallurgical test results, preliminary economic assessment, pre-feasibility study or feasibility study are being disclosed in this news release. The potential processing applications and benefits described herein are preliminary in nature and remain subject to completion of test work, validation and further engineering review.

The reference to the Company's previously announced ore-sorting program and the potential pathway to reduce future crushing and concentrator capital costs by up to 50% is based on the Company's prior disclosure dated May 19, 2026, and remains subject to the qualifications, assumptions and limitations described therein. No new ore-sorting test results or updated capital cost estimates are being disclosed in this news release.

About Rock Tech Lithium

Rock Tech is enabling the battery age by making the battery industries in Europe and North America more independent and competitive. The Company's goal is to ensure the supply of high-quality, locally produced lithium – supporting a resilient, sustainable, and transparent value chain from mine to battery-grade material.



Rock Tech relies on responsible sourcing, state-of-the-art and proven technologies, and a clear focus on circular economy principles. The Company's lithium converter projects in Guben, Germany (24,000 tonnes LHM per year) and Ontario, Canada (up to 32,000 tonnes LCE per year) form the foundation for a stable and regional supply to the battery and automotive industries. The Guben converter has been recognized as a Strategic Project under the EU Critical Raw Materials Act.

The raw materials for Rock Tech's converter projects are intended to be sourced exclusively from verifiably ESG-compliant suppliers. In Canada, Rock Tech relies, among other sources, on its wholly-owned Georgia Lake Project, which ensures a stable and sustainable supply for the North American market and is being developed in close partnership with local Indigenous communities. By integrating recycled materials, the Company aims to close the local battery loop.

With its facilities, Rock Tech intends to contribute to battery-grade material sovereignty and the achievement of climate targets. The company works in partnership with industry, policymakers, and community groups, and is committed to open communication and the highest environmental standards.

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CAUTIONARY STATEMENT REGARDING FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION:

Certain statements contained in this news release constitute "forward-looking information" under applicable securities laws and are referred to herein as "forward-looking statements". All statements, other than statements of historical fact, which address events, results, outcomes or developments that the Company expects to occur are forward-looking statements. When used in this news release, words such as "expects", "anticipates", "plans", "predicts", "believes", "estimates", "intends", "targets", "projects", "forecasts", "may", "will", "should", "would", "could" or negative versions thereof and other similar expressions are intended to identify forward-looking statements. In particular, this news release contains forward-looking information relating to, among other things: the receipt and use of funding from Ontario's Critical Minerals Innovation Fund; the completion, timing, scope and results of the crude tall oil evaluation project; the Company's collaboration with Thunder Bay Pulp and Paper, Queen's University and other project partners; the potential use of crude tall oil as a flotation reagent in lithium processing; the potential benefits of crude tall oil for processing efficiency, reagent supply, emissions, supply-chain localization, cost reduction and future technical and economic optimization work; the potential integration of the project results into future technical studies, engineering work or development plans for the Georgia Lake Lithium Project; the Company's previously announced ore-sorting program and the potential benefits thereof; the Company's broader Ontario mine-to-converter strategy, including the Georgia Lake Project and the proposed Red Rock Lithium Converter; the Company's proposed Guben and Ontario converter projects; the development of domestic and North American critical minerals supply chains; and the potential contribution of the Company's projects and initiatives to Ontario's battery, critical minerals, and advanced manufacturing and energy storage chains.



Forward-looking information is based on management's reasonable assumptions, estimates, expectations and opinions as of the date of this news release. Such assumptions include, without limitation: that the Company will receive and be able to apply the CMIF funding as anticipated; that the Company and its project partners will complete the planned test work as anticipated; that crude tall oil will be available in sufficient quantity and quality for testing; that crude tall oil may be capable of being evaluated as a potential reagent in lithium flotation applications; that test work results may be capable of being assessed for potential integration into future technical studies; that additional engineering, metallurgical and economic analysis will support continued development of the Georgia Lake Project; that required regulatory, environmental and other approvals will be obtained in a timely manner; that contractors, suppliers, equipment, project partners and technical personnel will be available on reasonable terms; that financing will be available to support the Company's development plans; and that market conditions, including lithium prices and demand for battery materials, will remain supportive of project development.

Neither the TSX venture exchange nor its regulation services provider (as that term is defined in policies of the TSX venture exchange) accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.