

EXHIBIT A

Permit

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STATE OF NEVADA

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Division of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation

Water Pollution Control Permit

Permittee: **Chemetall Foote Corporation**
Silver Peak Lithium Project
P.O. Box 98
Silver Peak, NV 89047

Permit Number: **NEV0070005 (Renewal 2012, Revision 00)**

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 445A.300 through 445A.730, inclusive, and regulations promulgated thereunder by the State Environmental Commission and implemented by the Division of Environmental Protection (the Division), this permit authorizes the Permittee to construct, operate, and close the Silver Peak Lithium Project, in accordance with the limitations, requirements and other conditions set forth in this permit. The Permittee is authorized to process up to 6,000 tons of ore annually using chemicals.

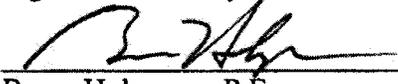
The facility is located in Esmeralda County within portions of Sections 26 through 28, Township 1 South, Range 40 East; Sections 1, 12, 13, and 21 through 25, Township 2 South, Range 39 East; and Sections 1 through 11, 15 through 20, and 29 through 32, Township 2 South, Range 40 East, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian, approximately 40 miles southwest of Tonopah, near the town of Silver Peak.

The Permittee must comply with all terms and conditions of this permit and all applicable statutes and regulations.

This permit is based on the assumption that the information submitted in the application of January 20, 1990, as modified by subsequent approved amendments, is accurate and that the facility has been constructed and is being operated as specified in the application. The Permittee must inform the Division of any deviation from or changes in the information in the application, which may affect the Permittee's ability to comply with applicable regulations or permit conditions.

This permit is effective as of **June 22, 2012**, and shall remain in effect until **March 23, 2017**, unless modified, suspended, or revoked.

Signed this 7th day of **June 2012**.



Bruce Holmgren, P.E.
Chief, Bureau of Mining Regulation and Reclamation

I. Specific Facility Conditions and Limitations

A. In accordance with operating plans and facility design reviewed and approved by the Division the Permittee shall:

1. Construct, operate, and close the facility in accordance with those design plans;
2. Contain within the fluid management system all process fluids including all meteoric waters which enter the system as a result of the 25-year, 24-hour storm event; and
3. Not release or discharge any process or non-process contaminants from the fluid management system.

B. Schedule of Compliance (None):

C. The fluid management system covered by this permit consists of the following process components:

1. Process plants including, but not limited to, all tanks (e.g. tank farm and acid tanks), basins, sumps, pumps, and piping necessary to connect components of the process facility;
2. Evaporation ponds, liming facility and the R-2 pond; and
3. Transfer pipes, ditches, valves, and pumps used in conveyance, control or detection of process fluids between process components.

D. Monitoring Requirements

<u>Identification</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
1. Fresh Water Well (WS)	Profile I ¹ and static water elevation, feet amsl	Quarterly
2. Monitoring well adjacent to the R-2 Pond (R-2W)	Profile I ¹ and static water elevation level, feet amsl	Quarterly
3. R-2 Pond (R-2)	Minimum freeboard, feet	Quarterly
4. Lithium hydroxide plant waste stream (HPWS)	Profile II ²	Annually
5. Lithium carbonate plant waste stream (CPWS)	Profile II ²	Annually
6. Brine well ³ (BW)	Profile II ² and static water elevation, feet amsl	Annually
7. Plant influent (PI)	Profile II ²	Annually

<u>Identification</u>	<u>Parameter</u>	<u>Frequency</u>
8. Petroleum Contaminated Soil (PCS) Screening Analyses: Each temporary holding pad cell, by PCS source type	VOCs ⁴ , SVOCs ⁵ , TPH ⁶	Prior to removal ⁷
9. PCS Hazardous Waste Determinations: Each PCS source	Hazardous waste determination ⁸	When required ⁸
10. PCS Management: Each temporary holding pad, treatment cell, and disposal location, by PCS source type	PCS volume added, volume removed and destination, total volume present (cubic yards)	Quarterly

The Permittee may request a reduction in the number of elements and frequency of analyses after four (4) quarters of complete monitoring based on justification other than cost. Such reductions may be considered formal modifications to the permit.

Abbreviations:

amsl = above mean sea level; S.U. = standard units

Footnotes:

(1) Profile I:

Alkalinity (as CaCO ₃)	Cadmium	Magnesium	Selenium
Bicarbonate	Calcium	Manganese	Silver
Total	Chloride	Mercury	Sodium
Aluminum	Chromium	Nickel	Sulfate
Antimony	Copper	Nitrate+Nitrite (Total as N)	Thallium
Arsenic	Fluoride	Nitrogen (Total as N)	Total Dissolved Solids
Barium	Iron	pH (± 0.1 S.U.)	Zinc
Beryllium	Lead	Potassium	

(2) Profile II includes Profile I plus the following:

Bismuth	Gallium	Phosphorus (Total)	Tin
Boron	Lithium	Scandium	Titanium
Cobalt	Molybdenum	Strontium	Vanadium

- (3) A different production (brine) well shall be sampled each year.
 - (4) Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) analyzed by EPA Method 8260B.
 - (5) Semi-Volatile Organic Compounds (SVOCs) analyzed by EPA Method 8270D.
 - (6) Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) analyzed by EPA Method 8015 Modified. If any gasoline-range petroleum is suspected, or if the source-type is unknown, both TPH-P (purgeable) and TPH-E (extractable) are required. Otherwise, only TPH-E is required.
 - (7) Each segregated source type of PCS must be sampled separately pursuant to the approved sample collection protocol. For temporary holding pad cells, analyses are required only in quarters when PCS removal from the pad is anticipated. Removal to an approved on-site disposal location is authorized if PCS meets screening levels.
 - (8) A hazardous waste determination is required: a) Initially, for each PCS source prior to management under the PCS Management Plan; b) When a PCS waste stream is suspected to have changed character since the last determination; and c) When a hazardous constituent is detected during screening analyses at a concentration suggestive of hazardous waste. Determinations must be performed pursuant to 40 CFR 262.11 using operator knowledge and/or applicable analytical testing methods described in EPA publication SW-846. Operator knowledge must be adequately described and sufficient to justify the determination.
- E. Quarterly and annual monitoring reports and spill reporting shall be in accordance with Part II.B.
- F. All sampling and analytical accuracy shall be in accordance with Part II.E.
- G. Permit Limitations
1. A minimum of two (2) feet of freeboard shall be maintained in the R-2 Pond at all times. All other ponds must maintain a freeboard of one foot.
 2. PCS that exceeds screening levels shall not be placed at an on-site disposal location.
 3. Failure to meet a Schedule of Compliance date.
- Exceedences of these limitations may be permit violations and shall be reported as specified in Part II.B.4.
- H. The facility shall maintain an automated device or a calibrated rain gauge, which shall be monitored daily, to record daily precipitation. A written record of all daily accumulations of precipitation shall be maintained on site.
- I. The Permittee shall inspect all control devices, systems and facilities weekly. Drainage and containment systems shall also be inspected during, when possible, and after major storm events. These inspections are performed to detect evidence of:

1. Deterioration, malfunction, or improper operation of control systems;
 2. Sudden changes in the level of the contents of any monitoring device;
 3. Severe erosion or other signs of deterioration in dikes, diversions, or other containment devices.
- J. Prior to initiating permanent closure activities at the facility or any process component within the facility, the Permittee must have an approved final permanent closure plan.
- K. The Permittee shall remit an annual review and services' fee in accordance with NAC 445A.232 starting July 1 after the effective date of this permit and every year thereafter until the permit is terminated or the facility has received final closure certification from the Division.
- L. The Permittee shall not dispose of or treat PCS on the mine site except as authorized by the approved PCS Management Plan. The approved PCS Management Plan, and the Division's Guidance for Mine-Site PCS Management Plans, are hereby incorporated into this permit by reference.

II. General Facility Conditions and Limitations

A. General Requirements

1. The Permittee shall achieve compliance with the conditions, limitations, and requirements of the permit upon commencement of each relevant activity. The Administrator may, upon the request of the Permittee and after public notice (if required), revise or modify a Schedule of Compliance in an issued permit if he determines good and valid cause (such as an act of God, a labor strike, materials shortage or other event over which Permittee has little or no control) exists for such revision.
2. The Permittee shall at all times maintain in good working order and operate as efficiently as possible, all devices, facilities, or systems installed or used by the Permittee to achieve compliance with the terms and conditions of this permit.
3. Whenever the Permittee becomes aware that he failed to submit any relevant facts in the permit application, or submitted incorrect information in a permit application or in any report to the Administrator, the Permittee shall promptly submit such facts or correct information. Any inaccuracies found in this information may be grounds for revocation or modification of this permit and appropriate enforcement action.

B. Reporting Requirements

1. The Permittee shall submit quarterly reports which are due to the Division on or before the 28th day of the month following the quarter and must contain the following:
 - a. Monitoring results from those locations identified in Parts I.D.1, I.D.2, and I.D.3;

- b. Analytical results of the solution collected from monitoring locations identified in Parts I.D.1 and I.D.2 reported on NDEP Form 0190 or equivalent;
- c. A record of spills and releases, and the remedial actions taken in accordance with the approved Emergency Response Plan on NDEP Form 0490 or equivalent;
- d. Analytical results, copies of hazardous waste determinations, and monitoring results, identified in Parts I.D.8, I.D.9, and I.D.10, pertaining to the approved PCS Management Plan; and
- e. An updated list of all PCS sources managed under the approved PCS Management Plan, with any new or changed sources highlighted, reported on NDEP Form PCS-01 or equivalent; current screening levels for each on-site disposal location; and a detailed explanation of any revisions to screening levels.

Facilities which have not initiated mining or construction, must submit a quarterly report identifying the status of mining or construction. Subsequent to any noncompliance or any facility expansion which provides increased capacity, the Division may require an accelerated monitoring frequency.

2. The Permittee shall submit an annual report by February 28th of each year, for the preceding calendar year, which contains the following:
 - a. Analytical results of the solution collected from monitoring locations identified in Parts I.D.4, I.D.5, I.D.6, and I.D.7;
 - b. Monitoring results from those locations identified in Part I.D.6;
 - c. A synopsis of spills and releases on NDEP Form 0390 or equivalent;
 - d. A brief summary of site operations, including the number of tons of ore processed during the year, construction and expansion activities and major problems with the fluid management system;
 - e. A table of total monthly precipitation amounts reported for the five-year history previous to the date of submittal;
 - f. An updated version of the facility monitoring and sampling procedures and protocols;
 - g. An updated evaluation of the closure plan using specific characterization data for each process component with respect to achieving stabilization; and
 - h. Graphs of leak detection flow rates, pH, total dissolved solids (TDS), sulfate as SO₄, chloride, nitrate + nitrite (Total as N), fluoride, zinc, and arsenic concentration (as applicable), versus time for all fluid sampling points. These graphs shall display a five-year history previous to the date of submittal. Additional constituents may be required by the Division if deemed necessary.

3. Release Reporting Requirements: The following applies to facilities with an approved Emergency Response Plan. If a site does not have an approved Emergency Response Plan, then all releases must be reported as per NAC 445A.347 or NAC 445A.3473, as appropriate.
 - a. A release of any quantity of hazardous substance, as defined at NAC 445A.3454, to surface water, or that threatens a vulnerable resource, as defined at NAC 445A.3459, must be reported to the Division as soon as practicable after knowledge of the release, and after the Permittee notifies any emergency response agencies, if required, and initiates any action required to prevent or abate any imminent danger to the environment or the health or safety of persons. An oral report shall be made by telephone to 888-331-6337 for in-State callers or (775) 687-9485 for out-of-State callers, and a written report shall be provided within ten (10) days in accordance with Part II.B.4.b.
 - b. A release of a hazardous substance in a quantity equal to or greater than that which is required to be reported to the National Response Center pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 302 must be reported as required by NAC 445A.3473 and Part II.B.3.a.
 - c. A release of a non-petroleum hazardous substance not subject to Parts II.B.3.a. or II.B.3.b., released to soil or other surfaces of land, and the quantity is equal to or exceeds 500 gallons or 4,000 pounds, or that is discovered in or on groundwater in any quantity, shall be reported to the Division no later than 5 P.M. of the first working day after knowledge of the release. An oral report shall be made by telephone to 888-331-6337 for in-State callers or (775) 687-9485 for out-of-State callers, and a written report shall be provided within ten (10) days in accordance with Part II.B.4.b. Smaller releases, greater than 25 gallons or 200 pounds and less than 500 gallons or 4,000 pounds, released to soil or other surfaces of land, or discovered in at least three cubic yards of soil, shall be reported quarterly on NDEP Form 0390 or equivalent.
 - d. Petroleum Products and Ethylene Glycol: If a release is subject to Parts II.B.3.a. or II.B.3.b., report as specified in Part II.B.3.a. Otherwise, if a release of any quantity is discovered on or in groundwater, or if the quantity is equal to or greater than 100 gallons released to soil or other surfaces of land, report as specified in Part II.B.3.c. Smaller releases, greater than 25 gallons but less than 100 gallons, released to soil or other surfaces of land, or if discovered in at least three cubic yards of soil, shall be reported quarterly on NDEP Form 0390 or equivalent.
4. The Permittee shall report to the Administrator any noncompliance with the permit.
 - a. Each such event shall be reported orally by telephone to (775) 687-9400, not later than 5 P.M. of the next regular work day from the time the

Permittee has knowledge of the circumstances. This report shall include the following:

- i. Name, address, and telephone number of the owner or operator;
 - ii. Name, address, and telephone number of the facility;
 - iii. Date, time, and type of incident, condition, or circumstance;
 - iv. If reportable hazardous substances were released, identify material and report total gallons and quantity of contaminant;
 - v. Human and animal mortality or injury;
 - vi. An assessment of actual or potential hazard to human health and the environment outside the facility; and
 - vii. If applicable, the estimated quantity of material that will be disposed and the disposal location.
- b. A written summary shall be provided within ten (10) days of the time the Permittee makes the oral report. The written summary shall contain:
- i. A description of the incident and its cause;
 - ii. The periods of the incident (including exact dates and times);
 - iii. If reportable hazardous substances were released, the steps taken and planned to complete, as soon as reasonably practicable, an assessment of the extent and magnitude of the contamination pursuant to NAC 445A.2269;
 - iv. Whether the cause and its consequences have been corrected, and if not, the anticipated time each is expected to continue; and
 - v. The steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate, and prevent recurrence of the event.
- c. The Permittee shall take all available and reasonable actions, including more frequent and enhanced monitoring to:
- i. Determine the effect and extent of each incident;
 - ii. Minimize any potential impact to the waters of the State arising from each incident;
 - iii. Minimize the effect of each incident upon domestic animals and all wildlife; and
 - iv. Minimize the endangerment of the public health and safety which arises from each incident.
- d. If required by the Division, the Permittee shall submit, as soon as reasonably practicable, a final written report summarizing any related actions, assessments, or evaluations not included in the report required in Part II.B.4.b., and including any other information necessary to determine

and minimize the potential for degradation of waters of the State and the impact to human health and the environment. Submittal of the final report does not relieve the Permittee from any additional actions, assessments, or evaluations that may be required by the Division.

C. Administrative Requirements

1. A valid permit must be maintained until permanent closure is complete. Therefore, unless permanent closure has been completed, the Permittee shall apply for permit renewal not later than one-hundred twenty (120) days before the permit expires.
2. Except as required by NAC 445A.419 for a permit transfer, the Permittee shall submit current permit contact information described in paragraphs (a) through (c) of subsection 2 of NAC 445A.394 within thirty (30) days after any change in previously submitted information.
3. All reports and other information requested by the Administrator shall be signed and certified as required by NAC 445A.231.
4. When ordered consistent with Nevada Statutes, the Permittee shall furnish any relevant information in order to determine whether cause exists for modifying, revoking and reissuing, or permanently revoking this permit, or to determine compliance with this permit.
5. The Permittee shall maintain a copy of, and all modifications to, the current permit at the permitted facilities at all times.
6. The Permittee is required to retain during operation, closure and post-closure monitoring, all records of monitoring activities and analytical results, including all original strip chart recordings for continuous monitoring instrumentation, and all calibration and maintenance records. This period of retention must be extended during the course of any unresolved litigation.
7. The provisions of this permit are severable. If any provision of this permit, or the application of any provision of this permit to any circumstance, is held invalid, the application of such provision to other circumstances, and the remainder of this permit, shall not thereby be affected.
8. The Permittee is authorized to manage fluids and solid wastes in accordance with the conditions of this permit. Issuance of this permit does not convey property rights of any sort or any exclusive privilege; nor does it authorize any injury to persons or property, any invasion of other private rights, or any infringement of Federal, State or local law or regulations. Compliance with the terms of this permit does not constitute a defense to any order issued or any action brought under the Water Pollution Control Statutes for releases or discharges from facilities or units not regulated by this permit. NRS 445A.675 provides that any person who violates a permit condition is subject to administrative or judicial action provided in NRS 445A.690 through 445A.705.

D. Division's Authority

The Permittee shall allow authorized representatives of the Division, at reasonable times, and upon the presentation of credentials to:

1. Enter the Permittee's premises where a regulated activity is conducted or where records are kept per the conditions of this permit;
2. Have access to and copy any record that must be kept per the conditions of this permit;
3. Inspect any facilities, equipment (including monitoring and control equipment), practices, or operations regulated by this permit; and
4. Sample or monitor for any substance or parameter at any location for the purposes of assuring permit and regulatory compliance.

E. Sampling and Analysis Requirements

1. Samples and measurements taken for the purpose of monitoring shall be representative of the monitored activity.
2. For each measurement or sample taken pursuant to the conditions of this permit, the Permittee shall record the following information:
 - a. The exact place, date, and time of the inspection, observation, measurement, or sampling; and
 - b. The person(s) who inspected, observed, measured, or sampled.
3. Samples must be taken, preserved, and labeled according to Division approved methods.
4. Standard environmental monitoring chain of custody procedures must be followed.
5. Samples shall be analyzed by a laboratory certified by the State of Nevada. The Permittee must identify the certified laboratory used to perform the analyses, laboratory reference number, sample date and laboratory test date in quarterly and annual reports.
6. The accuracy of analytical results, unless otherwise specified, shall be expressed in mg/L and reliable to at least two (2) significant digits. The analytical methods used must have a lower level of detection equal to or less than one-half the reference value for Profile I constituents. Profile II constituents that have established reference values shall be quantified using an analytical method with a lower level of detection equal to or less than the reference value.

F. Permit Modification Requirements

1. Any material modification must be reported by submission of a new application, or, if such changes will not violate the limitations specified in the permit, by notice to the permit issuing authority of such changes. Any change which materially modifies, as defined in NAC 445A.365, the permitted

facility must comply with NAC 445A.392, NAC 445A.4155, NAC 445A.416, and NAC 445A.417.

2. Prior to the commencement of mining activities at any site within the State which is owned or operated by the Permittee but not identified and characterized in the application, the Permittee shall submit to the Division a report which identifies the locations of the proposed mine areas and waste disposal sites, and characterizes the potential of mined materials to release pollutants. Prior to development of these areas the Division shall determine if any of these new sources will be classified as process components and require engineered containment as well as permit modification.
3. The Permittee must notify the Division in writing at least thirty (30) days before the introduction of process solutions into a new process component or into an existing process component which has been materially modified, or of the intent to commence active operation of that process component.
4. The Permittee must obtain a written determination from the Administrator of any planned material modification(s) as to whether it is considered a permit modification.
5. The Permittee must give advance notice to the Administrator of any planned changes or activities which are not material modifications in the permitted facility that may result in noncompliance with permit requirements.

Prepared by: Rob Kuczynski, P.E.
Date: June 7, 2012
Permit Revision 00: Permit and Fact Sheet Renewal 2012.
(Fact Sheet Revision 00)