



## Lithium offers greener energy, less geopolitical instability – Atlas CEO

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- ▶ Lithium is a hot investment at the moment, not only as a tool for improving the environment but also for reducing geopolitical risk
- ▶ Policymakers from California to New York to the European Union are giving big incentives for electric vehicles, and that is going to drive substantial lithium demand
- ▶ Hard-rock mining offers an alternative to brine mining, which typically uses large amounts of water in places where water is scarce



Marc Fogassa, CEO and Chairman, Atlas Lithium  
Source: Atlas Lithium Corp.

*Atlas Lithium Corp. is a U.S.-based exploration company searching for lithium to feed the world's growing need for the minerals that will be essential to meet swelling demand for electric vehicles and other battery-dependent technologies. The company is focusing its search on Brazil, where it owns 52 mineral rights spread over 56,078 acres in Minas Gerais.*

*Atlas also holds 100% ownership in other early-stage projects focused on minerals crucial to developing the EV supply chain, such as nickel, cobalt, rare earths, titanium and graphite.*

*S&P Global Commodity Insights spoke with Atlas CEO and Chairman Marc Fogassa about the future of lithium demand and how miners plan to meet that need. The following conversation has been edited for length and clarity.*

### **S&P Global Commodity Insights: What do you think the future for lithium holds, and why is it such a hot investment right now?**

**Marc Fogassa:** It begins with the fact that oil and derivatives of oil — gasoline, diesel, etc. — create a dependency on external geopolitical players. It makes us susceptible to external forces when we have the technology, i.e., EV and electrification, that can allow us to become independent of such.

You can see how the invasion of Ukraine by Russia has transfigured the oil market and subjected us all to the price of gasoline out there when you go fill out your tank. That is nearly absurd, right? Especially if you live in California.

Number two, by electrifying as much as we can, we are really preserving our world. So, it's an environmental, environmental issue as well. So it's an economic issue. It's an environmental issue.

These are the things that I think about, and those two things make me feel good about waking up and working hard to contribute to that.



**It seems that those who put the most emphasis on environmental, social and governance might also be some of the early adopters of electric vehicles, even if more and more people are picking up an EV. How does Atlas Lithium approach ESG to differentiate itself from other lithium producers?**

I think that's why you have places like California, where they will force everybody to drive EVs. California passed a law that by 2035, you cannot sell fossil fuel cars in California. That's the biggest U.S. market. So what happened a month later? New York state passed the same law. So you can't sell fossil fuel cars in New York. Then the European Union passed a law.

It's going to be forced upon people. It really will. To your second question, there are two kinds of companies out there. There are the ones that talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk and don't do anything ESG. We actually don't talk, and we do things.

We've planted 6,000 trees in Brazil. We didn't have to; we planted 6,000 trees to benefit the communities around us. We also created community roads. Where we work in Brazil to be better is to create drainage systems for the roads.

When somebody invests in us, or somebody buys our product, we are using the things that are the most environmentally friendly for what we do.

**So, if we're going to be buying a lot of EVs, that means we'll likely need a lot of lithium, right? Are we going to be able to find the lithium we need, and if not, what do we need to do to bridge the gap?**

I like to think about practical ways to identify, out of the 52 mineral rights that we have, which we should be drilling first, right, because we don't have 52 drills to use. It'd be very costly. You have to maximize where we grow. We're trying to devise ways using soil geochemistry to see what the correlation is between what we find more easily on the surface of a mineral versus what's down below from the drilling.

Drilling is expensive; it's \$200 per meter to drill something, right? So it is expensive when you have to do 100 meters, 200 meters or 300 meters in several new holes. It adds up.

That's what I can do as somebody who has, you know, rights for lithium, to maximize the amount of resource I can provide to the marketplace in terms of leaching. So, I think I'm making my contribution.

**What can governments do to incentivize increased lithium production?**

I think the West's approach, in terms of the [Inflation Reduction Act] that passed recently, seems quite interesting. We're spending some time understanding the meaning for us. We are an American company with resources outside of the U.S. So, we're exploring how we could benefit from that, but clearly, the U.S. has taken more of a lead than many other countries. I'm heartened by that, and I hope it continues to be the case.

**Who are some of the customers you are hearing from about securing lithium supply, particularly given that everyone is seeing a high demand for this material on the horizon?**

We've been contacted by different players. Among the mix of players, you have an oil and gas company. We have some companies that are intermediaries for car companies, and we have a car company.

What was interesting is that they found us, and we have zero marketing dollars right now. We are just focused on understanding our geology, progressing rapidly with metallurgical studies and working on our Nasdaq uplisting. Still, they found us through the press releases that we put out on our great results.

**Speaking of geology, can you tell me what advantages you see as a producer focused on mining hard-rock deposits versus the type of brine mining we see in desert locations?**

Well, the problem with brine is that, in a nutshell, it destroys the environment. That's the issue.

If you look at what it does to the environment, it is brutal. Spodumene, if we have, say, an open pit mine, once you retrieve it, you only need gravimetric physics to concentrate to lithium concentrate. Then we sell that, and then it goes into a lithium hydroxide plant, which is where the brine lithium goes anyway, but we did not destroy the environment in doing that. It is a huge difference.

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