



U.S. and global demand for lead on the rise

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Lead-Acid Batteries are the Most Sustainable, Reliable and Stable Power Storage Source

LONDON, UK (Oct. 22, 2013) – Following the world’s largest metal industry event, London Metal Exchange Week, industry experts are touting the future of lead and its vital role in modern society.

According to the International Lead Zinc Study Group (ILZSG), global demand for lead is expected to increase 5 percent in 2013 and an additional 4.6 percent in 2014. Demand for lead in the U.S. is expected to increase by 7.6 percent in 2013, bolstered by both original equipment purchases of new vehicles and replacement purchases of lead-acid batteries.

In 2014, forecasts for lead in the U.S. show a more modest increase of 1.5 percent, a figure that *could rise* on news out of General Motors (GM) that its 2014 Malibu (mild) Hybrid will no longer carry lithium-ion batteries, but instead rely on lead-acid batteries.¹

Recent lead-acid battery optimism is reinforced by the fact that other battery technologies have yet to reach the [high recycling rate of lead-acid options](#).² In the U.S., 98 percent of spent lead-acid batteries³ are collected and returned to permitted recyclers, which recycle both lead and plastic, keeping [2.4 million tons of batteries out of landfills](#).⁴

“The global demand for lead is very strong,” said Dr. Andy Bush, International Lead Association (ILA) managing director. “Lead’s credentials as the most recycled of all major metals, coupled with its easy availability, make lead one of the most sustainable materials in the modern world.”

“Lead-based batteries effectively operate in a closed loop – commercial considerations drive the collection of used batteries, and efficient recycling puts the vast majority of the components back into use,” said ILA’s technical manager, Dr. Alistair Davidson, who recently presented a study on the future of lead to ILZSG. “As a result, lead is a fantastic example of the circular economy in action – something that policy makers around the world increasingly recognize as being necessary to address negative environmental and social impacts associated with raw material extraction and production.”

End

¹ [Wall Street Journal](#)

² BCI: http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/batterycouncil.org/resource/resmgr/Brochures/BCI_Safety_reliability_7-12-.pdf

³ BCI: Confirmed by Smith Bucklin, Sept. 6, 2013

⁴ ABR: http://americasbatteryrecyclers.com/pdf/fact_sheet.pdf

Editor's notes

In addition to the environmental advantages of using recycled materials, lead-acid batteries provide a strong economic advantage for consumers.

This cost advantage, resulting from recycling, has been quantified by the [U.S. Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory](#), which favourably compared the lifecycle "cradle-to-gate" production costs of lead-acid, lithium-ion, nickel-metal hydride, nickel cadmium and sodium-sulfur batteries.

Despite the high recycling rate of lead materials in the U.S., increased usage of lead in energy storage applications for hospitals and telecommunications, medical and nuclear protective shielding, as well as [alternative energy](#) storage for wind and solar power, means recycled lead cannot meet the total domestic demand in the U.S.

By the numbers:

- More than 80 percent of lead produced in the U.S. is used in lead-acid batteries.⁵
- 126 million auto and industrial batteries in the U.S. are recycled every year.⁶
- More than [98 percent of all battery lead in the U.S. is recycled](#) (compared to 58 percent of aluminum cans, 63 percent of paper, 41 percent of glass bottles and 85 percent of tires).⁷
- U.S. lead-acid battery recycling keeps 2.4 million tons of batteries out of landfills.⁸
- Lead-acid technology has been around for more than 150 years.⁹

To read more about the sustainable uses of lead-acid batteries, view <http://batteryCouncil.org/>.

About ILA

The International Lead Association is a membership body that supports companies involved in the mining, smelting, refining and recycling of lead. The ILA represents the producers of about 3 million tonnes of lead.

With offices in the UK and USA the ILA provides a range of technical, scientific and communications support and is focused on all aspects of the industry's safe production, use and recycling of lead. It funds bodies such as the International Lead Management Center and the International Lead Zinc Research Organization. Visit www.ila-lead.org

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⁵ BCI: <http://batteryCouncil.org/?page=LeadAcidBattSafety>

⁶ ABR: http://americasbatteryrecyclers.com/pdf/fact_sheet.pdf

⁷ BCI: http://c.yimcdn.com/sites/batteryCouncil.org/resource/resmgr/Brochures/BCI_Sustainability_recycling.pdf

⁸ ABR: http://americasbatteryrecyclers.com/pdf/fact_sheet.pdf

⁹ BCI: http://batteryCouncil.org/?page=Safety_Reliability