

EV demand and Trump create the perfect stage for a Miss Cobalt

eCobalt Solutions Inc. (TSX: ECS | OTCQB: ECSIF) (“eCobalt”) is a Canadian mineral exploration and mine development company primarily owning the Idaho Cobalt Project, a high-grade and primary cobalt deposit located in the United States; a fact from which eCobalt’s ethical credentials are automatically derived. The metal’s recent history has been chaotic, but it appears to be resolving into a clear demand for exactly what eCobalt is on-track to provide; it’s no surprise, then, that the trailing twelve months has seen their share price risen from C\$0.53 in January 2016 to C\$ 0.7 in January 2017.

Cobalt is usually produced as a by-product of nickel and copper mining, but with declining prices of these metals closing operations worldwide, the focus has shifted strongly to the problem of primary supply. The highly-anticipated eCobalt Idaho Cobalt Project has this issue already covered and is by far the most advanced project in the region. The Idaho Cobalt Project should go online within a year since it has completed all preliminary steps, with full capacity expected within two. Over a 12.5 year mine life the Idaho Cobalt Project is expected to produce almost 19,000 tonnes of cobalt sulphate.

Throughout 2016, concerns were raised over the involvement of child labour in the cobalt supply chain, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Amnesty International has been focused on the issue for some time and this year joined with African Resources Watch (Afrewatch) to publish a full report on the practices of artisanal miners in the southern regions of the conflict-ridden state. The research exposes significant weaknesses in the regulation of artisanal mining,

from limited guidance on health and safety to insufficient labour rights.

The DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world and has suffered from decades of war and resulting political instability. Artisanal mining became a source of livelihood for many people when the largest state owned mining company collapsed in the 1990s, growing further during the Second Congo War when President Laurent Kabila encouraged people to dig for themselves since there was no hope of reviving industrial mining. These artisanal miners, referred to as creuseurs in the DRC, mine by hand using the most basic tools to dig out rocks from tunnels deep underground; children as young as seven scavenge for rocks containing cobalt in mountains of industrial mining debris before washing and sorting the ore for sale.

Now, with people around the world increasingly relying on rechargeable batteries to power a myriad of essential portable devices, the demand for cobalt is climbing; along with it, the need for honesty and due diligence becomes paramount. Regardless of a gadget's desirability, any firm will struggle to sell its products in today's market if it became known that children were enslaved for its creation.

Consumers today seek to rectify injustices. Insinuations of child labour or unethical production sends buyers scrambling for genuinely ethical supply sources- great news for anyone already developing responsible cobalt supply sources.

The China Chamber of Commerce of Metals Minerals & Chemicals Importers & Exporters (CCCME) has instigated the Responsible Cobalt Initiative (RCI), supported by Chinese and other Asian companies, including a major Chinese cobalt producer, mobile giant Huawei, Sony, Apple, HP and Samsung amongst others. The CCCME will produce an action plan in the next 12 months focusing on promoting co-operation with the government of DRC, civil society at large and affected local communities on the

ground.

Elon Musk ambitiously claims they will produce 500,000 electric vehicles a year by 2018, and has repeatedly stated that the cobalt will be sourced exclusively in North America. The price of cobalt is expected to continue rising over the next year. The mounting ethical pressures of the modern world has created the perfect stage for eCobalt to accept the position of Miss Cobalt, USA, graciously and on a platform of strong ethics.