

ENTEK Lithium Separators Receives Conditional Commitment from DOE for Indiana EV Battery Separator Manufacturing Plant

ENTEK announced today that it has received a conditional commitment of up to \$1.2 billion for a direct loan to ENTEK Lithium Separators from the U.S. DOE

LEBANON, OR, OR, UNITED STATES, July 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ENTEK, the only U.S.-owned and U.S.-based producer of 'wet-process' lithium-ion battery separator materials, announced today that it has received a conditional commitment of up to \$1.2 billion for a direct loan to ENTEK Lithium Separators LLC (ENTEK) from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Loan Programs Office (LPO).



ENTEK Lithium Separators Terre Haute, IN facility rendering

The loan will finance the new facility in Terre Haute, Indiana to manufacture lithium-ion battery separators to be used primarily in electric vehicles (EVs). This project will strengthen and onshore the lithium-ion battery cell supply chain, enabling the creation of batteries used in advanced technology vehicles for EV propulsion.

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Larry Keith

“There has never been a more exciting time to be a manufacturer in the battery industry,” stated ENTEK CEO Larry Keith. “For forty years, ENTEK has been serving the battery separator needs of its customers with a commitment to productivity and innovation that our customers require for their battery applications.”

A battery separator is a microporous membrane

sandwiched between the anode and cathode of a battery. The principal functions of the battery separator are to prevent electronic conduction (i.e., shorts or direct contact) between the anode and cathode while permitting ionic conduction via the electrolyte. Separators play an essential role in the performance and safety of lithium-ion batteries. ENTEK manufactures both ceramic coated and uncoated separators.

“ENTEK is a technology company at its core with expertise in equipment design and fabrication, process technologies, and materials science,” stated ENTEK CTO Richard Pekala, “This combination makes ENTEK the right company to lead the U.S. expansion of separator manufacturing.”

Based on current form factors chosen by cell manufacturers, the project will support roughly 1.9 million mid-size EVs or 1.3 million eSUVs.

The project will make a significant contribution to domestic separator capacity and help US EV battery manufacturers satisfy the Inflation Reduction Act’s domestic content rules under the 30D Clean Vehicle Credit.

Additionally, ENTEK will be able to sell its separators to manufacturers of lithium-ion batteries for energy storage applications and is a contracted supplier to KORE Power.

“KORE Power proactively partnered with ENTEK to ensure a reliable, domestic supply of battery separators for our Arizona giga factory, the KOREPlex” said Lindsay Gorrill, Founder and CEO of KORE Power. “As a U.S. manufacturer, we are dedicated to bolstering the success of companies like ENTEK to onshore our critical battery component supply chain.”

The project is expected to create 763 construction jobs and 635 operational jobs. ENTEK’s hiring strategy includes a focus on local labor, including workers who have been displaced from manufacturing industries. ENTEK’s recruitment partnerships include Ivy Tech Community College, Indiana State University, local workforce boards and workforce systems, community-based organizations, and Apprenticeship Readiness Programs.

“ENTEK and Ivy Tech have entered into an early partnership to develop training programs and access strategies to attract, train, and retain a qualified workforce,” stated Lea Anne Crooks, Ivy Tech Chancellor in Terre Haute, IN, “Working with ENTEK to tailor programs that match our community with ENTEK’s clean energy jobs has been a collaboration among Ivy Tech, ENTEK, and our community leaders and groups to help ensure we provide excellent opportunities for Hoosiers for both current and future generations.”

This project reinforces President Biden’s Investing in America agenda to onshore and re-shore domestic manufacturing technologies that are critical to meeting the Biden-Harris Administration’s ambitious goal that half of all new vehicles sold in 2030 are zero-emissions vehicles. Today’s announcement also supports the President’s comprehensive strategy to build a

safer, more sustainable transportation system and slash all greenhouse emissions from the transportation sector by 2050.

Domestic EV manufacturing has surged in response to the massive growth in the domestic and global EV markets and the financial incentives recently made available under the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. ENTEK aims to become the US's first end-to-end, domestic supplier of "wet process" battery separators for the North American lithium-ion EV battery market.

While this conditional commitment indicates DOE's intent to finance the project, the company must satisfy certain technical, legal, environmental, and financial conditions before the Department enters into definitive financing documents and funds the loan.

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