



Lynas responds to Australian rare earth export concerns

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Opposition in Australia and Malaysia, but on track for yearend start-up

Australia's Lynas Corp. today played down concerns about shipping rare earths from its mine at Mt Weld in Western Australia and maintained that the project is on track for first production before the end of this year.

The rare earths will be shipped from Mt Weld through the port of Fremantle. Lynas has faced considerable local opposition to these plans

Fremantle MP Adeles Carles recently called for rare earths not to be shipped out of the local port over fears that the health of local residents will be affected.

"Why should Fremantle workers and residents bear the risks associated with low level radioactive elements thorium and uranium found in the Lynas product for the 20 year life of this mine?" she said.

"Fremantle Port was never designed for modern bulk mineral export activity and there is no buffer zone to residential areas," The MP added.

Too late, Lynas says

However, Carles complaints come too late in the day, according to Lynas, which has already secured health and environmental approvals for its plans to ship the rare earths from Mount Weld to Malaysia via Fremantle.

The Western Australian government supports this view, with Minister for Transport Troy Buswell reaffirming that the company has all of its approvals in place and that the government believes that Lynas will be shipping a "relatively inert" product.

Lynas is not only facing opposition to its plans in Australia, a vocal group of Malaysians are also opposed to the planned processing plant near Kuantan, on the east coast of Malaysia.

This week Carles met with protestors from Malaysia who want to stop Lynas from commissioning its 11,000 tpa rare earth oxides plant. The members of the Save Malaysia! Stop Lynas! group plan to protest outside Lynas' Perth offices on Friday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently reviewed the rare earths oxide plant, known as Lynas Advanced Materials Plant (LAMP), in Malaysia, and made some recommendations about improving the operation.

The company is now waiting for a pre-operational licence from the Malaysian government to allow it to ship first concentrate from Mt Weld through Fremantle to Kuantan for stockpiling.

"The Lynas Advanced Materials Plant construction continues to progress, and subject to receipt of the pre-operational licence, first production from the LAMP remains scheduled to occur by the end of 2011," a Lynas spokesman said.