

## Battery Metals Market Signals

### Bull

- Recently, the cathode material market has been dominated by justified demand buying on dips. LFP producers maintain stable operating rates. Downstream demand is mixed: support from EV sector is relatively limited, while the energy storage market remains robust.
- Tianci Materials announced plans to build a new energy material industrial park in Yichang, Hubei, via its subsidiary Hubei Tianci, featuring an annual output of 300,000 tons of iron phosphate.
- In early March 2026, Zimbabwe's cabinet formally approved a ban on all exports of lithium ore and concentrates, which has pushed up lithium salt costs in the short term.
- Electrolyte prices are stable for the time being. LiPF<sub>6</sub> (lithium hexafluorophosphate) is trending weak on the cost side, while solvent prices have surged sharply due to geopolitical conflicts.

### Bear

- Spot lithium carbonate prices are range-bound with a downward shifting center. The market remains in stalemate: upstream suppliers are holding inventories to support prices, while downstream participants adopt a dip-buying strategy on rigid demand.
- Prices of lithium salts and spodumene have pulled back, linked to a shift in market risk appetite. Non-ferrous metals including silver, copper, and lithium have all declined, while capital has concentrated in crude oil and chemicals.
- Negative electrode producers operate on a production-to-order basis, ensuring ample supply of anode materials.
- In March, demand for both NCM and LFP batteries has seen a seasonal rebound. However, following the peak export window for NCM in February–March, overseas demand is likely to drop significantly in April as tax rebates expire. NCM cathode material discounts are under pressure.

### Others

- As of the week ending Mar 13th, the weekly trading volume of lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange was 1,777,530 tons, down 8.80% on the week. The open interest was 616,621 tons, down 1.89% on the week.
- The registered warehouse warrants of lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange were 36,403 tons last week, compared with 36,330 tons in previous week.

Sources: China Passenger Car Association, Bloomberg, China Customs, Guangzhou Futures Exchange, FIS, China National Bureau of Statistics, CME, Fastmarket.

## Weekly Futures Price and Open Interest Change

Open Interest /lots	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	OI WoW %	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	Price	Cobalt Metal \$/mt	Lithium Hydro \$/mt	Price WoW %	Cobalt Metal \$/mt	Lithium Hydro \$/mt
Mar-26	1,012	2,400	Mar-26	-0.5%	0.0%	Mar-26	57,563	19,850	Mar-26	0.2%	-1.7%
Apr-26	867	2,210	Apr-26	-7.6%	1.1%	Apr-26	56,769	19,770	Apr-26	-2.3%	0.2%
May-26	1,071	2,087	May-26	-0.6%	0.9%	May-26	56,769	19,780	May-26	-2.5%	0.3%
Jun-26	1,248	2,364	Jun-26	11.0%	0.8%	Jun-26	56,835	19,800	Jun-26	-2.5%	0.4%
Jul-26	771	2,034	Jul-26	13.4%	1.2%	Jul-26	57,210	20,320	Jul-26	-2.4%	0.0%
Aug-26	780	1,489	Aug-26	13.2%	2.3%	Aug-26	57,320	20,340	Aug-26	-2.4%	0.1%
Sep-26	723	1,603	Sep-26	15.5%	2.2%	Sep-26	57,430	20,350	Sep-26	-2.3%	0.1%
Oct-26	578	1,213	Oct-26	0.0%	3.6%	Oct-26	57,717	20,400	Oct-26	-2.2%	-1.9%
Nov-26	567	1,177	Nov-26	0.0%	3.8%	Nov-26	57,827	20,500	Nov-26	-2.3%	-1.4%
Dec-26	674	1,172	Dec-26	0.0%	3.8%	Dec-26	57,937	20,600	Dec-26	-2.2%	-1.0%
Jan-27	411	136	Jan-27	-3.5%	0.0%	Jan-27	58,533	20,700	Jan-27	-2.3%	-2.6%
Feb-27	366	158	Feb-27	-3.9%	0.0%	Feb-27	58,643	20,800	Feb-27	-2.2%	-2.6%
Mar-27	384	185	Mar-27	-3.8%	0.0%	Mar-27	58,753	20,900	Mar-27	-2.1%	-3.0%
Apr-27	408	20	Apr-27	0.0%	0.0%	Apr-27	59,150	21,000	Apr-27	-2.2%	-3.9%
May-27	408	20	May-27	0.0%	0.0%	May-27	59,260	21,100	May-27	-2.1%	-4.1%
Jun-27	313	20	Jun-27	0.0%	0.0%	Jun-27	59,304	21,200	Jun-27	-2.1%	-4.3%
Jul-27	277	115	Jul-27	0.0%	0.0%	Jul-27	59,745	21,300	Jul-27	-2.2%	-5.1%
Aug-27	277	115	Aug-27	0.0%	0.0%	Aug-27	59,811	21,500	Aug-27	-2.2%	-4.9%
Sep-27	331	115	Sep-27	0.0%	0.0%	Sep-27	59,855	21,650	Sep-27	-2.2%	-4.8%
Oct-27	293	115	Oct-27	0.0%	0.0%	Oct-27	60,252	21,800	Oct-27	-2.3%	-5.4%
Nov-27	295	115	Nov-27	0.0%	0.0%	Nov-27	60,296	21,950	Nov-27	-2.3%	-5.4%

Source: CME

### CONTACT

**Paul Geddes**  
 PaulG@freightinvestor.com  
 m: (+44) 7745644966

**Federico Picciolini**  
 FedericoP@freightinvestor.com  
 m: (+44) 7543223444