Tesla cobalt free batteries

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Tesla released interesting and rare details about its approach to sourcing lithium, nickel, and cobalt directly from mines instead of through its cell suppliers. This approach is going to be critical as companies fight to secure those minerals for battery production to support electric vehicle growth.

This approach enables Tesla to have direct relationships with miners of critical minerals and helps secure supply while allowing the company to monitor quality closely and ensure responsible environmental and social sourcing.

Tesla explained in its latest Impact Report:

While cobalt, nickel, and lithium go through multiple processing steps by different companies, some of the more important environmental and social risks in this supply chain are present at mine sites. Direct sourcing from mining companies allows Tesla to engage directly in local contexts instead of having to rely on multiple midstream companies that typically sit between EV makers and mining. It also enables more transparent and traceable supply chains and better environmental and social data.

Tesla even released some very rare and interesting details about the effort.

The automaker says that it had directly sourced over 95% of the lithium hydroxide, 50% of the cobalt, and more than 30% of the nickel used in its high-energy density cells (NCA and NCM) in 2021. The rest came from deals between the battery cell manufacturers and their own material suppliers.

As we previously reported, Tesla also released a list of the nine mining companies that are supplying those minerals.

Another, less discussed aspect of the company’s Impact Report is that it makes it clear how aware Tesla is that mining and its environmental and social impact are going to become more significant challenges for EV adoption in the future.

In response, Tesla has joined the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA), and the company’s direct-sourcing approach also helps ensure the implementation of those standards.

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