

# Focus Graphite Advanced Materials Commences Work Program with AETC for C4V Digital DNA(TM) Testing and Strategic Specialty Applications

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## **Exclusion of Canadian natural graphite from President Trump's "Liberation Day" U.S. Tariffs underscores urgency to fast-track testing and qualification with industry partners.**

Focus Graphite Advanced Materials Inc. (TSXV:FMS) (OTCQB:FCSMF) (FSE:FKC) ("Focus" or the "Company"), is pleased to announce the commencement of its advanced material preparation and testing program in collaboration with U.S.-based Advanced Energy Technologies Corp. ("AETC"), a leading processor of industrial graphite and carbon materials for the upstream and advanced downstream applications. This work is being undertaken to provide qualification materials to Charge CCCV ("C4V") of Binghamton, New York for qualification as part of C4V's proprietary Digital DNA™ Rapid Access qualification platform, as well as to support various strategic and specialty industrial collaborations currently under prototype development and contracting with C4V's customer base.

The objective of this initiative is to fast-track the generation of premium-quality samples, including Focus's proprietary silicon-enhanced spheroidized graphite for anode active materials, from its Lac Knife project located in Québec, Canada. Pilot lots of qualification products will be delivered to C4V for detailed performance testing, evaluation and integration into form-factored batteries, following their approval for use. Focus previously announced the strategic testing collaboration with C4V in a press release dated March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024, which highlighted the importance of the Digital DNA™ platform, as well as the potential for Lac Knife material to be validated as a critical component for green utilities battery energy storage systems (BESS), gigafactory supply chains, and specialty and defense-related energy storage systems. The work program with AETC represents the next building block in that collaboration.

Focus welcomes the recent decision by the U.S. administration to exempt several critical minerals, including natural graphite, from the new "Liberation Day" tariffs announced by President Trump on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025. Under Section 3(b) of the executive order, critical minerals deemed essential to national security and clean energy objectives - including natural graphite - have been granted full exemptions. The urgency to execute this qualification test work stems from growing geopolitical tensions and trade restrictions, particularly between the U.S. and China. Despite soaring demand, the U.S. remains 100% reliant on foreign import of natural graphite - primarily from China. The Company is well positioned to respond to increased market demand and policy support on both sides of the border.

Jason Latkowcer, VP Corporate Development of Focus, commented, "We're aggressively executing our strategy to secure offtake partners and fast-track commercialization into advanced technology applications. This program is focused on qualifying our material for premium markets where demand is accelerating, and supply chains remain highly vulnerable. Critical minerals have become a key geopolitical lever, and graphite has been under Chinese export restrictions since October 2024."

Jeff York, Chairman of the Company, added, "Success happens when you solve a real problem. Right now, the U.S. and North America are in urgent need of secure, domestic sources of specialty graphite for national defense and the advanced materials supply chain. China is restricting exports of the type of graphite we have at Lac Knife, and the U.S. feels it. That's why natural flake graphite from Canada was left off the new tariffs. With two projects in hand and one in the final stages of the mine permit process, Focus is looking more and more like the near- and long-term solution."

About American Energy Technologies Company

American Energy Technologies Co. (AETC) is a woman-owned, privately held business concern which

conducts operations out of the greater Chicago area. In its Arlington Heights, IL facility AETC operates three business units: a manufacturing plant making battery-ready graphite and carbons, a pilot demonstration facility for battery materials and graphite dispersions, and a fully-functional research and development laboratory supporting the above business units. Additionally, in late 2021, AETC acquired another plant site, known as "AETC- East", in Wheeling, IL. It is the only North American, end-to-end graphite processing site where AETC can take in graphite bearing rock as raw material and output battery-ready graphite, to serve a variety of market segments such as lithium-ion, metal air, lead-acid, alkaline, lithium primary batteries and electrochemical super capacitors. Currently, AETC is the only organization in North America capable of producing commercial quantities of spheroidized surface coated battery-ready graphite for lithium-ion battery anodes. It develops and operates unique refining, particle spheroidization, and carbon coating technologies. AETC is developing and produces spherical graphite (both natural and synthetic), expanded graphite, partially graphitized nanostructured carbons, ultra-high purity graphite-based electrically conductive inks, paints, and coatings which find use within the industry. AETC is a proud supply chain member of electric vehicles and an approved supplier to ten battery manufacturers and one fuel cell producer.

For more information on AETC please visit <https://www.usaenergytech.com>

#### About Charge CCCV

Charge CCCV (C4V) is a lithium-ion battery technology company specializing in battery performance optimization and gigafactory design. Based in Binghamton, New York, C4V collaborates with industry-leading raw material and equipment suppliers to bring to market fully optimized batteries with key economic advantages, providing best-in-class performance for various applications.

C4V has played a significant role in establishing Imperium3 New York (iM3NY), a consortium dedicated to building a lithium-ion battery gigafactory in Endicott, New York. This initiative has garnered substantial financial support, including a \$50 million loan from Riverstone Credit Partners and \$35 million in equity funding, underscoring the confidence in C4V's technological expertise and its potential impact on the energy storage industry.

For more information on C4V please visit <https://www.chargecccv.com>

#### About Focus Graphite Inc.

Focus Graphite Advanced Materials is redefining the future of critical minerals with two 100% owned world-class graphite projects and cutting-edge battery technology. Our flagship Lac Knife project stands as one of the most advanced high-purity graphite deposits in North America, with a fully completed feasibility study. Lac Knife is set to become a key supplier for the battery, defense, and advanced materials industries.

Our Lac Tétépisca project further strengthens our portfolio, with the potential to be one of the largest and highest-purity and grade graphite deposits in North America.

At Focus, we go beyond mining - we are pioneering environmentally sustainable processing solutions and cutting-edge battery technologies, including our patent pending proprietary silicone-enhanced spheroidized graphite technology, designed to enhance battery performance and efficiency. Our commitment to innovation ensures a chemical-free, eco-friendly supply chain from mine to market.

Collaboration is at the core of our vision. We actively partner with industry leaders, research institutions, and government agencies to accelerate the commercialization of next-generation graphite materials. As a North American company, we are dedicated to securing a resilient, locally sourced supply of critical minerals - reducing dependence on foreign-controlled markets and driving the transition to a sustainable future.

For more information on [Focus Graphite Inc.](http://www.focusgraphite.com) please visit <http://www.focusgraphite.com>

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### Cautionary Note Regarding Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements contained in this press release constitute forward-looking information. These statements relate to future events or future performance. The use of any of the words "could," "intend," "expect," "believe," "will," "projected," "estimated," and similar expressions, as well as statements relating to matters that are not historical facts, are intended to identify forward-looking information and are based on the Company's current beliefs or assumptions as to the outcome and timing of such future events.

In particular, this press release contains forward-looking information relating to, among other things, the Company's collaboration with Advanced Energy Technologies Corp. ("AETC"), the preparation and delivery of advanced graphite materials for evaluation by Charge CCCV ("C4V"), the performance testing and potential qualification of the Company's proprietary silicon-enhanced spheroidized graphite within C4V's Digital DNATM platform, and the role of Focus Graphite's materials in strategic, defense-related, and commercial applications. It also includes statements regarding the potential geopolitical significance of Canadian graphite supply, the impact of Chinese export restrictions, the Company's positioning as a near- and long-term secure supplier of specialty graphite materials, and the anticipated advancement of the Lac Knife project through the final stages of the permitting process.

Forward-looking statements are subject to known and unknown risks, uncertainties, and other factors that may cause actual results, performance, or achievements to differ materially from those expressed or implied by such statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, risks related to market conditions, regulatory approvals, changes in economic conditions, the ability to raise sufficient funds on acceptable terms or at all, operational risks associated with mineral exploration and development, and other risks detailed from time to time in the Company's public disclosure documents available under its profile on SEDAR+.

The forward-looking information contained in this release is made as of the date hereof, and the Company is not obligated to update or revise any forward-looking information, whether as a result of new information, future events, or otherwise, except as required by applicable securities laws. Because of the risks, uncertainties, and assumptions contained herein, investors should not place undue reliance on forward-looking information.

Neither TSX Venture Exchange nor its Regulation Services accepts responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this release.

SOURCE: Focus Graphite, Inc.

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