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Battery Recycling and Recycled Content

Commercial Signals · October 2026

A Commercial watch on battery recycling and recycled content: recycler ownership and solvency, offtake contracts for recycled metals, LFP black mass pricing and vehicle-maker take-back programs. Read for a North American maker of modules, packs and containerized storage systems that buys LFP cells. Three signals from one cycle.

#	SIGNAL	CONFIDENCE	HORIZON	STATUS
1	Ecobat finished exiting lithium recycling on September 2, 2026, and Ascend Elements' Georgia plant, in Chapter 11 since April, sold for a reported \$3 million to R3 Lithium	High	Immediate (0-3 months)	Verified
2	Recycled battery metals are now being sold under 10-year contracts between refiners and traders, but no agreement with a pack or storage maker has been disclosed	Medium	Long-term (1-3 years)	Review
3	Rivian's October 14 expansion with Redwood Materials sends scrap and retired packs to Redwood to be assessed for storage or recycling, following its 10 MWh storage deployment in April	Medium	Short-term (3-12 months)	Review

Every signal rests on two or more dated events. Confidence is published as a band. Where a signal sits below High, the reasoning names the evidence that is missing. Status says where the evidence stands: Verified, Review, or Inconclusive — we looked, and the evidence does not yet support a firmer call.

SIGNAL 1 OF 3

Ecobat finished exiting lithium recycling on September 2, 2026, and Ascend Elements' Georgia plant, in Chapter 11 since April, sold for a reported \$3 million to R3 Lithium

HIGH Immediate (0–3 months) · Capital & Corporate Activity · **Verified**

Ascend Elements entered Chapter 11 in April 2026, and its Covington, Georgia recycling plant was bought by R3 Lithium in July for a reported \$3 million. R3 announced the start of operations on September 10, 2026. Separately, Ecobat closed the sale of its Casa Grande, Arizona lithium-ion recycling operations on September 2, 2026, which it called the final step in its exit from the lithium business.

REASONING

Two recyclers with US sites changed hands or left the business within about two months. They are different cases. Ascend went through bankruptcy and its plant has a new owner and operator. Ecobat chose to leave the business and sold its assets. The common point for this reader is that a recycling partner's name on a contract may no longer match who owns or runs the plant. The \$3 million price comes from court records as reported by a trade magazine, so it is stated as reported.

PATTERN

April 2026: Ascend Elements filed for Chapter 11, as reported by MassLive via Yahoo on August 25, 2026. July 2026: R3 Lithium, formed by former Ascend executives and investors, bought the Covington plant through the bankruptcy proceedings; court records show it was the successful bidder, and the price was reportedly \$3 million. September 2, 2026: Ecobat announced it had closed the sale of its Casa Grande lithium-ion recycling operations and assets. September 10, 2026: R3 announced the start of operations at Covington, with the plant still being upgraded toward continuous commercial production.

IMPLICATION

If you send manufacturing scrap or retired packs to a recycler, or plan to buy recycled material, the counterparty on your contract may have changed owner, or may be about to. A change of owner can reset permits, pricing and delivery commitments. Contracts that lack insolvency and ownership-change terms leave you with little recourse.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

By November 30, 2026, confirm who now owns and runs each recycling partner's plant, and whether your existing terms survived any ownership change. At every renewal, add ownership-change and insolvency terms, including notice, consent to assignment and a named substitute recycler.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [PR Newswire — Ecobat completes sale of lithium recycling business](#) — September 2, 2026 release; Casa Grande sale described as the final step in the exit from the lithium business.
- [Yahoo Finance \(MassLive\) — Collapse of a mass battery recycling company](#) — August 25, 2026 report on Ascend Elements' April 2026 Chapter 11 and the \$3 million sale of the Covington plant.
- [Best Magazine — R3 Lithium restarts recycling plant](#) — September 10, 2026; July purchase through bankruptcy proceedings, reported price per court records, continuous production expected late summer 2027.

- [Battery-News — R3 Lithium begins lithium carbonate recovery operations in Georgia](#) — September 14, 2026; start of operations, a \$15 million Series A for line upgrades, plant capacity.

SIGNAL 2 OF 3

Recycled battery metals are now being sold under 10-year contracts between refiners and traders, but no agreement with a pack or storage maker has been disclosed

MEDIUM Long-term (1–3 years) · Supply & Production Readiness · **Review**

Trafigura and Nth Cycle announced a 10-year, \$1.1 billion offtake for recycled nickel and lithium carbonate on April 8, 2026. On September 10, 2026, R3 Lithium said it had signed about \$1 billion of offtake contracts, naming Trafigura as one customer. No source shows a publicly disclosed agreement between a recycler and a pack or storage maker.

REASONING

Long contracts show that recycled lithium is becoming a traded material at the refiner and trader level. The buyers named are traders, not battery makers. R3 gives no volumes, prices or delivery dates, and its plant is still being upgraded. The band is held at Medium because the market is forming but this reader cannot yet buy into it.

PATTERN

November 2025: Ascend Elements agreed to supply Trafigura with 15,000 metric tons of lithium carbonate from 2027 through 2031; Ascend then entered Chapter 11 in April 2026. April 8, 2026: Trafigura signed a 10-year, \$1.1 billion offtake with Nth Cycle for 2,000 metric tons a year of contained nickel and 1,500 metric tons a year of lithium carbonate, made from about 12,000 metric tons of black mass; the supplying facilities in South Carolina and the Netherlands are both expected to start in 2028. September 10, 2026: R3 Lithium announced about \$1 billion in signed offtake, including Trafigura, with no volumes, prices or schedules disclosed.

IMPLICATION

Recycled lithium supply is being tied up by traders before battery makers can reach it. If you plan to claim recycled content or to buy it, the first contracts you can sign will probably sit behind these. The Ascend deal also shows that a signed offtake can fail if the supplier does.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

By the end of Q1 2027, send a written request to R3 Lithium and one other US recycler asking for volume available to third parties, product form, delivery start date, pricing basis and remedies for non-delivery. Do not count any volume as secured until a signed agreement states these terms.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Resource Recycling — Trafigura signs \\$1.1B deal for recycled battery metals](#) — April 8, 2026; Trafigura–Nth Cycle terms and volumes, facility start in 2028, and the November 2025 Ascend–Trafigura agreement.
- [Business Wire — R3 Lithium announces initiation of operations in Georgia](#) — September 10, 2026; about \$1 billion in offtake including Trafigura, no volumes or prices disclosed.
- [Best Magazine — R3 Lithium restarts recycling plant](#) — September 10, 2026; continuous commercial production expected to begin in late summer 2027.

SIGNAL 3 OF 3

Rivian's October 14 expansion with Redwood Materials sends scrap and retired packs to Redwood to be assessed for storage or recycling, following its 10 MWh storage deployment in April

MEDIUM Short-term (3–12 months) · First Deployments & Adoption · **Review**

Rivian and Redwood Materials announced an energy storage partnership on April 14, 2026, with 10 MWh at Rivian's Normal, Illinois plant. General Motors announced a full-lifecycle partnership with Redwood on June 9, 2026. On October 14, 2026, Rivian expanded its Redwood agreement to production scrap and end-of-life packs, with each pack assessed for storage or recycling.

REASONING

Three dated announcements from two vehicle makers show the same design: one partner takes scrap and retired packs and decides case by case between reuse and recycling. This is a vehicle-battery model. The sources do not state the cell chemistry of the packs. They also do not show how much material is being diverted from recyclers; that effect is inference and is not shown by the sources.

PATTERN

April 14, 2026: Rivian and Redwood announced a storage partnership, with 10 MWh at the Normal, Illinois plant built from more than 100 second-life Rivian packs. June 9, 2026: General Motors announced a partnership with Redwood covering manufacturing scrap, end-of-life recycling and repurposed packs, including a planned deployment at a Michigan plant of about 100 packs, or 7.2 MWh. October 14, 2026: Rivian expanded the partnership so Redwood recycles Rivian production scrap and receives retired packs through Rivian's service centers, evaluating each to repurpose or recycle.

IMPLICATION

Large customers may start to expect that a storage system's end-of-life route is planned and priced at sale, as vehicle makers now do. Utilities and developers could ask you what happens to a system at the end of its contract. A reuse option also changes what is left for recyclers, though no source measures that.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

In the first quarter of 2027, ask at least one qualified second-life operator to assess your retired modules and quote both a reuse price and a recycling fee. Add end-of-life terms to new customer contracts that say who controls pack removal, testing and routing.

SOURCES & WHAT THEY SIGNAL

- [Redwood Materials — Rivian and Redwood Materials announce energy storage partnership for manufacturing](#) — April 14, 2026; 10 MWh at Normal, Illinois from more than 100 second-life Rivian packs.
- [Redwood Materials — General Motors becomes first automaker to partner with Redwood across the full battery lifecycle](#) — June 9, 2026; scrap recovery, end-of-life recycling and a planned 7.2 MWh repurposed-pack deployment.
- [Yahoo Finance \(Business Wire\) — Rivian and Redwood Materials expand partnership](#) — October 14, 2026; production scrap and retired packs, each assessed to repurpose or recycle.

SET UP A SIGNAL ON YOUR QUESTION

A watch on your question runs every cycle.

These signals came from one cycle of a standing watch. Name a company, a market or a regulation, and the watch keeps running whether or not anyone opens the platform. Every signal arrives rated for confidence and horizon, with the dated events behind it and the sources that carry the weight.

See all the samples and tell us your question at ezassi.com/ezassi-signals-sample-library.

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