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# Use of electrochemical cathode-reduction method for leaching of cobalt from spent lithium-ion batteries

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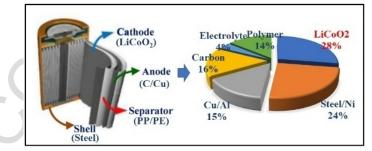
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7 Abstract: The present work is focused on the use of electrochemical cathode-reduction method for 8 leaching LiCoO<sub>2</sub> produced by spent lithium-ion batteries. The thermodynamics, kinetics, and 9 electrochemical impedance spectroscopy analyses are used to determine the probable control 10 mechanism involved in the leaching of cobalt from spent LiCoO2. The leaching efficiencies reached 11 about 90% for cobalt and nearly 94% for lithium using 1.25 mol/L of malic acid and a working 12 voltage of 8 V for 180 min at 70 °C. Kinetics analysis indicates that the leaching process of cobalt 13 could be divided into two stages: the first stage is controlled by a surface chemical reaction, and the 14 second stage is controlled by a combination of the surface chemical reaction and diffusion. 15 Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy, X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy, and transmission 16 electron microscopy analysis show that the combination control at the second stage is related to the 17 form of Co(OH)<sub>3</sub> produced during the leaching process of spent LiCoO<sub>2</sub>. Finally, a novel process 18 for the leaching of cobalt from spent LiCoO<sub>2</sub> is proposed. 19 Keywords: spent lithium-ion batteries; leaching; electrochemical cathode reduction; kinetics; EIS

#### 20 1. Introduction

21 The manufacture of lithium-ion batteries (LIBs) is increasing to meet the global demand for 22 power sources required for portable electronic devices, electric vehicles, and other such applications 23 because of their favourable features such as their high-energy density, high cell voltage, modest size 24 and low self-discharge (He et al., 2017b; Horeh et al., 2017). However, this has led to the release of 25 large quantities of spent LIBs (Yang et al., 2017). These spent LIBs should not be disposed into 26 landfills because they contain heavy metals and organic electrolytes such as LiPF<sub>6</sub>, which are 27 potential hazards to the ecosystem and human health (Xin et al., 2015; Pant et al., 2017). At the 28 same time, spent LIBs have been identified as attractive secondary sources of valuable metals owing 29 to the limited amount of natural reserves and their ever-increasing demands (Fig. 1) (Xiao et al., 30 2017). Hence, reasonable management and recycling of spent LIBs using suitable methods should 31 be developed that could benefit both the global environment and economy.



32 33

Fig. 1. Components of a typical lithium-ion battery.

LiCoO<sub>2</sub> is the first commercialized cathode material type, and it is widely employed in most commercial LIBs that power consumer electronics devices. Therefore, it is regularly discarded in large quantities, and this quantity is expected to increase further in the coming years. Spent LiCoO<sub>2</sub> batteries contain significant quantities of cobalt and lithium (**Fig. 1**), which have a high economic value (Bertuol et al., 2016). Therefore, many studies have investigated on developing methods to recover cobalt and lithium from spent LiCoO<sub>2</sub> batteries (Gu et al., 2017). The recycling technologies of spent LiCoO<sub>2</sub> batteries can be categorized in two: the hydrometallurgy method and the Download English Version:

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