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POTASH COULD SECURE STATE'S ECONOMIC HEALTH

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THE US state of Michigan could become one of the world's leading sources of potash, following an investigation into an almost forgotten deposit by West Michigan University's (WMU) Michigan Geological Repository for Research and Education.

After testing geological drilling samples stored at the university, WMU stated that the deposit could herald the start of a new industry in Michigan worth as much as US\$65 billion in the long term – surpassing the state's historical oil and gas production revenues and triggering explosive job growth in Osceola and Mecosta counties.

Potash – one of the major components of agricultural fertiliser – is currently only mined at three locations in the US.

According to WMU, potash prices were climbing as supplies dwindled.

The deposit, within the Borgen Bed, is owned by Michigan Potash Co, which formed in late 2011 and secured 400 20-year leases of mineral rights, including the Borgen Bed, which lies under 14,500 acres in Mecosta and Osceola counties.

"This is the United States' only shovel-ready potash project," Michigan Potash Co geologist, engineer and general manager Theodore Pagano said. "What we're looking at is the introduction of an industry that is critical to the economic health of the state. We'll be producing a Michigan product for Michigan farmers that would dramatically reduce the expensive transport costs on the more than 300,000 tons of potash consumed in our state annually."