An Open Letter from Frank Wittchen, VP and GM
Imerys Graphite & Carbon

28 May 2020

Dear colleagues and business partners,

First, I express my sincere hope that you are all safe and well. These last months we have been faced with challenges unlike any we have ever faced before. No one has been left untouched by the pandemic. Concerns about the health and wellbeing of our loved ones, our friends and our colleagues, our business partners and our future have been at the forefront of all of our minds. At the same time we have learned new ways of working while maintaining social distancing and separation across all functions, operational and administrative alike. Today I would like to take this opportunity to share with you actions we have taken to steer through the storm so far, and our hopes as we move towards the second half of 2020.

As a global company, it was essential to act quickly to adapt our ways of working in order to prevent the proliferation of COVID-19 while ensuring business continuity. We immediately established a central crisis management committee and satellite committees in each of our sites around the globe. This allowed us to monitor the evolution of the pandemic in all of the communities in which we operate, and to take appropriate actions in a timely manner.

Our number one priority has been and always will be the health and safety of our employees. We have quickly and rigorously incorporated local regulations, Imerys Group protocols, and site specific protocols into our daily operational routines. This ensures a safe working environment for all those present on our sites and offices - including employees, contractors and supply chain partners. We are very proud that we have not had a single COVID-19 case across our whole operation as of today.

At the same time, we are committed to continuously serve our valued customers - many of whom are part of the supply chain for essential products. Several medical and related devices essential for the fight against COVID-19 are powered by lithium-ion or alkaline batteries containing our products. We also help connecting people during periods of confinement as our products can be found in electronic devices such as smartphones and computers.

At the beginning of the crisis we proactively positioned inventories in strategic locations globally to maintain deliveries to our customers. As lockdown restrictions disrupted logistics flows around the world, we worked closely with our customers to find the best solutions possible. As of today our teams managed to have all of our sites fully operational and we are able to produce all our lines of carbon
black, synthetic and natural graphite, CVD coated graphites and silicon carbide. My sincere thanks go out to our highly committed and professional team for this success.

Since governments are starting to gradually ease the lockdown restrictions, I believe we can prepare to shift gears from crisis management to recovery and growth. To achieve this we have to embrace the “New Normal”. We will continue to carefully monitor the evolution of the pandemic, remain vigilant, continue to adopt best practices with respect to health and safety, and accelerate our activities in this context. Our team is committed to serve our customers and support them through this tough journey and to come out stronger in the second half of 2020.

In difficult times real teamwork based on trust and commitment makes the difference. I am honoured to find this within the whole Imerys organization and I am confident that we will tackle the challenges we will face together.

Best Regards,

Frank Wittchen
VP and GM, Imerys Graphite & Carbon