

US shipment a 'test' for port

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The boss of a magnesium pharmaceutical pilot project says its trial shipment to one of the US' biggest health service companies will be a test for future logistics as the project's opening date is delayed once more.

EcoMag has taken 10 tonnes of its unrefined magnesium product from its site on the outskirts of Karratha and shipped it to the US for the manufacturing of products sold in pharmaceutical company CVS and Walmart, ranging from pain relief, psoriasis paste cream and gel and shampoos.

EcoMag chief executive Tony Crimmins said the trial run would test whether Karratha worked as an appropriate port.

"It's a very significant one for us to move product in a container from Karratha to the USA, it's a real test of our

logistics that we're going to be doing in the future when the plant is much bigger and there's much more load leaving Karratha," he said.

"It allows us to calculate the profitability for the customers involved so this allows us to get costings and exact costings so we can see how attractive our product is. If we can do it directly from Karratha to the world, it makes it so much easier and the other option is taking it down to Perth or Geraldton, which is not what we want to do."

Mr Crimmins said the company was also considering shipping from Port Hedland.

EcoMag takes Dampier Salt production wastewater, known as bitterns, and turns it into high-purity magnesium products used in the production of specialty glasses, aeronautical industry, paint filler, metal processing, fire

retardants and cosmetics. Speaking to the Pilbara News in September, Mr Crimmins said the project, which could one day generate \$40 million a year and employ up to 36 residential staff, was ready to go ahead.

He now says its opening date has again been delayed due to bureaucracy as well as border restrictions, purchasing equipment and hiring staff. "The things that have slowed us down are more of the things not related to the actual project itself or the markets because there is a huge demand for what we've got," he said. "You've got a lot of government requirements for EPA, mining tenements and making sure they're all correct. I'd hope we can get it started in a month."

The company plans to make 600 tonnes of magnesium organics in its first project phase.