



# Freeport-McMoRan Inc. (FCX)

Updated January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 by Josh Arnold

## Key Metrics

<b>Current Price:</b>	\$28	<b>5 Year CAGR Estimate:</b>	0.8%	<b>Market Cap:</b>	\$39 B
<b>Fair Value Price:</b>	\$26	<b>5 Year Growth Estimate:</b>	2.0%	<b>Ex-Dividend Date:</b>	N/A
<b>% Fair Value:</b>	106%	<b>5 Year Valuation Multiple Estimate:</b>	-1.2%	<b>Dividend Payment Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Dividend Yield:</b>	N/A	<b>5 Year Price Target</b>	\$29	<b>Years Of Dividend Growth:</b>	N/A
<b>Dividend Risk Score:</b>	N/A	<b>Retirement Suitability Score:</b>	N/A	<b>Last Dividend Increase:</b>	N/A

## Overview & Current Events

Freeport-McMoRan is a leading global mining company that is headquartered in Arizona. The company operates large, long-lived, geographically diverse mines with significant reserves of copper, gold, and molybdenum. The geographical footprint includes Indonesia, North America, South America, and Africa. It produces roughly four billion pounds of copper annually, and more than 2 million ounces of gold. Freeport-McMoRan should generate nearly \$20 billion in revenue this year and has a market capitalization of \$39 billion.

Freeport reported fourth quarter and full-year earnings on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with results beating expectations for revenue and adjusted earnings. Revenue was up 15% year-over-year to \$4.5 billion as the company was once again helped by elevated gold prices. Average realized prices were \$3.40 per pound for copper, which was up 24% year-over-year, and \$1,870 per ounce for gold, which was up 25%.

Copper sales volume was down -4% from the same period last year to 866 million pounds, while net copper cash costs were down -23% to just \$1.28 per pound. Gold sales volume was down nearly -8% year-over-year to 293 thousand ounces, but we remind investors that gold production is generally quite volatile from quarter to quarter.

Earnings came to \$708 million, or \$0.48 per share, which was up from \$9 million, and \$0.00 on a per-share basis in the same period a year ago. Guidance was trimmed slightly for 2021 for copper and gold sales volume, which is now at 3.8 billion pounds for copper, and gold volume is forecast to be down to 1.3 million ounces.

We forecast a sizable rebound in profits this year as elevated metals pricing and strict cost controls should lead to much stronger profits.

## Growth on a Per-Share Basis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2026
<b>EPS</b>	\$4.78	\$3.19	\$2.64	-\$1.26	-\$11.31	-\$3.16	\$1.25	\$1.78	-\$0.17	\$0.54	<b>\$2.20</b>	<b>\$2.43</b>
<b>DPS</b>	\$1.00	\$1.19	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$0.46	---	---	\$0.20	\$0.20	\$0.05	---	---
<b>Shares<sup>1</sup></b>	948	949	1038	1039	1246	1445	1448	1449	1451	1469	<b>1480</b>	<b>1500</b>

Freeport endured a tough period given metals pricing was weak for some time. However, those days have passed and 2021 should be much stronger. Given this, we've assumed a forward growth rate of 2% on what could be a much higher earnings base for 2021. With earnings expected to rise significantly this year, we see sustained growth from here as challenge considering it would need another sustained rise in metals pricing.

Freeport's future growth will be heavily dependent upon copper pricing, as that is where it derives most of its revenue. With copper volume being highly dependent upon global economic activity, Freeport will suffer until the current global recession has passed in its entirety. However, once there is a return to normal activity, copper demand should pick up and with it, pricing. With the company saving money on every line item of cost, margins should reflate rather quickly. Still, we note that as with any commodity company, Freeport's revenue and margins have significant volatility from year to year, so this forecast has significant upside and downside risk due to factors outside of Freeport's control.

<sup>1</sup> Share count in millions

Disclosure: This analyst has no position in the security discussed in this research report, and no plans to initiate one in the next 72 hours.



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## Valuation Analysis

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Now	2026
Avg. P/E	10.0	11.8	12.4	16.4	---	45.6	11.9	10.3	---	25.5	12.7	12.0
Avg. Yld.	2.1%	3.2%	3.8%	3.8%	3.0%	---	---	1.3%	1.8%	0.3%	---	---

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Freeport’s price-to-earnings multiple has been quite erratic in the past decade. The company’s wild swings in earnings have produced some very large and very small P/E multiples in the past, and shares trade for 12.7 times our earnings estimate after another rally. We assign fair value at 12 times earnings given this volatility, and the fact that commodity companies tend to see lower valuations during times of economic stress.

Freeport suspended its dividend in 2020 after one \$0.05 payment. While we expect Freeport to pay a dividend again at some point in the future, there has yet to be any indication as to when that may be, other than “sometime in 2021”, as seen in the Q4 earnings release.

## Safety, Quality, Competitive Advantage, & Recession Resiliency

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	2026
Payout	21%	37%	48%	64%	---	---	---	10%	---	9%	---	---

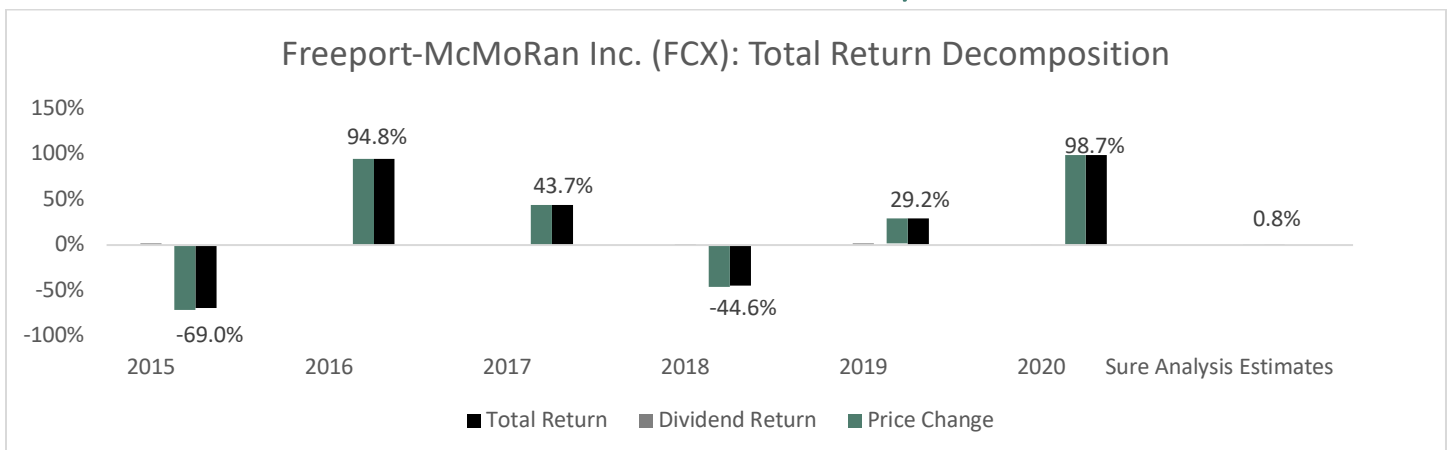
Freeport has ceased paying dividends until earnings recover - consistent with other periods of weak earnings – and we believe the company will only reinstate its payment when it is safe to do so.

The company’s competitive advantage – if it has one – is in its scale. Freeport produces enormous volumes of copper and can therefore generally achieve lower product costs. However, it is still a mining company and advantages are difficult to come by. The company also suffers greatly during periods of economic weakness due to its exposure to copper, and it has more than \$8 billion in debt on its balance sheet. It pays hundreds of millions of dollars annually just in debt servicing costs, so its prospects for getting out of debt are quite dim given unpredictable earnings. We see the balance sheet as a significant negative for Freeport and note that it greatly increases risks for shareholders.

## Final Thoughts & Recommendation

We see Freeport-McMoRan as a high-risk way to enter the commodity space. The company’s exposure to copper is very profitable during times of strong economic activity but devastating in weak periods. We see Freeport producing 0.8% annual returns from here. As a result, we rate the stock a sell given the significant uncertainty surrounding the recovery, and its highly leveraged balance sheet. While Freeport is faring better than expected, the stock is pricing this in.

## Total Return Breakdown by Year



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## Income Statement Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Revenue</b>	20880	18010	20921	20001	14607	14830	16403	18628	14402	14,198
<b>Gross Profit</b>	9960	6449	6284	1507	-12808	-2704	4423	5183	1297	2,543
<b>Gross Margin</b>	47.7%	35.8%	30.0%	7.5%	-87.7%	-18.2%	27.0%	27.8%	9.0%	17.9%
<b>SG&amp;A Exp.</b>	415	431	657	580	558	597	477	443	414	370
<b>Operating Profit</b>	9140	5755	5351	702	-13551	-3378	3609	4546	674	1,964
<b>Operating Margin</b>	43.8%	32.0%	25.6%	3.5%	-92.8%	-22.8%	22.0%	24.4%	4.7%	13.8%
<b>Net Profit</b>	4560	3041	2680	-1268	-12195	-4315	1817	2602	-239	599
<b>Net Margin</b>	21.8%	16.9%	12.8%	-6.3%	-83.5%	-29.1%	11.1%	14.0%	-1.7%	4.2%
<b>Free Cash Flow</b>	4086	280	853	-1584	-3133	924	3256	1892	-1170	1,056
<b>Income Tax</b>	3087	1510	1475	225	-1951	371	883	991	510	944

## Balance Sheet Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Total Assets</b>	32070	35440	63473	58674	46577	37317	37302	42216	40809	42,144
<b>Cash &amp; Equivalents</b>	4822	3705	1985	464	177	4245	4526	4217	2020	3,657
<b>Accounts Receivable</b>	892	927	1728	953	645	1126	1322	829	741	892
<b>Inventories</b>	3869	4576	5018	5361	4075	3642	4149	4503	4073	3,893
<b>Goodwill &amp; Int. Ass.</b>	325	334	2296	334	316	305	307	398	402	---
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	13517	14129	38242	36200	34533	28060	26006	24324	23361	23,476
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	1353	1568	2144	2439	2251	1540	1546	1661	1654	2,708
<b>Long-Term Debt</b>	3537	3527	20706	18849	20324	16027	13229	11141	9826	9,711
<b>Shareholder's Equity</b>	15642	17543	20934	18287	7828	6051	7977	9798	9298	10,174
<b>D/E Ratio</b>	0.23	0.20	0.99	1.03	2.60	2.65	1.66	1.14	1.06	0.95

## Profitability & Per Share Metrics

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Return on Assets</b>	14.8%	9.0%	5.4%	-2.1%	-23.2%	-10.3%	4.9%	6.5%	-0.6%	1.4%
<b>Return on Equity</b>	32.4%	18.3%	13.9%	-6.5%	-93.4%	-62.2%	25.9%	29.3%	-2.5%	6.2%
<b>ROIC</b>	22.0%	13.0%	7.6%	-2.9%	-33.1%	-15.0%	7.3%	9.7%	-0.8%	2.2%
<b>Shares Out.</b>	948	949	1038	1039	1246	1445	1448	1449	1451	1469
<b>Revenue/Share</b>	21.86	18.88	20.80	19.25	13.50	11.25	11.28	12.78	9.93	9.72
<b>FCF/Share</b>	4.28	0.29	0.85	(1.52)	(2.90)	0.70	2.24	1.30	(0.81)	0.72

Note: All figures in millions of U.S. Dollars unless per share or indicated otherwise.

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