

TransAlta Legislation, E2SSB 5769: Background, Policy Summary and Benefits

On March 5th, Washington environmental leaders announced a landmark agreement with Gov. Chris Gregoire and TransAlta Corp. to phase out the company's massive 1460MW coal-fired power plant between 2020 and 2025. This timeline provides an opportunity for cleaner power like energy efficiency, wind and solar, to replace **the largest coal-fired power plant in the Pacific Northwest, and one of the largest in the country**. This power plant is the single largest source of dangerous air pollution in Washington state, including climate pollution, mercury and haze. With growing pressure from the public (including environmental groups, clean energy advocates, health professionals, students, the faith community, and hunters and anglers) to move away from dirty coal, environmentalists, the governor's office, and TransAlta convened to discuss ways to transition this plant off of coal. E2SSB 5769 is the result of those meetings.

E2SSB 5769 will...

...phase out the harmful practice of burning coal in Washington: TransAlta operates two 730MW boilers. This bill would retire the first by Dec. 31, 2020, and the other by Dec. 31, 2025.

...protect us from harmful air pollution: The legislation requires installation of "selective noncatalytic reduction" (SNCR) pollution controls on both boilers by January 1, 2013. These pollution controls will **reduce harmful smog-forming nitrogen oxide pollution** emissions from the plant.

...invest in the community's economic future and a clean energy future for Washington: The agreement provides **\$68 million in investments to help the community and state** transition to clean energy technologies, including:

- **\$30 million from TransAlta for economic development** and helping Centralia residents and businesses reduce their energy bills.
- **\$25 million from TransAlta for energy technologies** with the potential to create considerable energy, economic development, and air quality or environmental benefits.
- **\$13 million from the state's** Community Economic Revitalization Board and the Public Works Board.
- TransAlta will also **clean up the site** and ready it for future **economic development**, beginning at least 24 months prior to closure.

...protect ratepayers by ensuring that utilities need to get regulatory approval before signing any new long-term contracts for TransAlta coal power.

...allow for a new era for renewable energy in the northwest: This agreement will open up the largest market opportunity for clean energy in the region's history, creating an opportunity for **new clean energy jobs**.

National, Regional Implications

With the planned retirement of Oregon's Boardman coal-fired power plant in 2020 and Washington's TransAlta plant in 2020 and 2025, **we will see the end of coal-burning in the Pacific Northwest**. Instead, we will **invest in cleaner energy sources and more jobs in the region**.

As one of the largest coal-fired power plants in the country, retiring TransAlta in an orderly manner showcases to other states and regions that they too can **slash pollution, protect their residents' health, and create many more jobs by investing in clean energy** rather than burning coal.

Building Bridges

This agreement demonstrates that by working together, the people of Washington and the Northwest can build **a model for the nation** of how investing in the transition to a clean energy future can create jobs and a healthy economy.

Built on our shared values, this agreement represents common ground between **environmental organizations, labor unions, the local business community and Gov. Gregoire**.

"This [agreement] happened because they were willing to talk with each other, and with Gov. Chris Gregoire, to strike a compromise. As a result, **it's virtually impossible to determine a winner and a loser in this deal.**"

The Olympian, March 11, 2011