



MEDIA RELEASE

Doctors Celebrate TransAlta Announcement re: Coal Closures

CALGARY, April 20, 2017 - The Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE) is celebrating today. One of the three power companies operating coal plants in Alberta, TransAlta, has announced that it will accelerate the closure of its coal-fired power plants operating in Alberta.

TransAlta has announced that it will close the first of its coal-fired generators in less than nine months, two years earlier than they were required to do under existing federal regulations. It plans to convert the remainder of its coal-fired fleet to natural gas by 2023; a full six years before their previously regulated closure date of December 31, 2029.

“This is great news for the health of Albertans,” states Dr. Joe Vipond, a CAPE board member who has actively campaigned for the closure of Alberta’s coal plants. “Albertan children will breathe easier and have less exposure to brain-damaging mercury, and their grandparents will have a decreased risk of cardiovascular, pulmonary, and neurological disorders. Thanks TransAlta.”

The negative health effects of air pollution from coal combustion are substantial and well documented in the medical literature. All of these plants lie directly upwind from the capital city of Edmonton, which is home to over 1 million people. The citizens will now benefit from the sizeable decrease in sulfur dioxide, fine particulate matter, and mercury from the closed and converted plants.

“This is great news for the climate as well. The 18 coal-fired units in Alberta account for 17% of the greenhouse gases emitted in Alberta,” offered Kim Perrotta, Executive Director at CAPE. “TransAlta’s actions demonstrate that Alberta’s Climate Leadership Plan is working; that it is sending the right signals to industry.”

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CAPE is a non-profit organization, run by physicians, that seeks to improve human health by protecting the planet.