

**For Immediate Release: March 5, 2011**

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## **Historic agreement reached to phase out coal-burning in Washington**

OLYMPIA – Today, major environmental organizations in Washington reached an historic agreement with the TransAlta Corp. and Governor Gregoire to phase out coal-fired power generation in Washington. The agreement reflects all three parties' shared vision of a coal-free future for Washington, has the support of local labor organizations, and will provide a model for the nation of how investing in the transition to a clean-energy future can create jobs and a healthy economy.

This agreement will serve as the foundation for legislation that would put in place a responsible, well-planned transition for Lewis County beyond dirty, outdated coal. Over the next few days, the Washington State Senate will consider legislation that would give the local community adequate funding to clean up the polluted plant site, prepare for future economic development, and build the infrastructure for long-term economic prosperity and good, local jobs. This legislation is one of the four environmental community priorities for the 2011 legislative session.

"This is a giant step forward toward a healthier and safer Washington, free from coal," said Doug Howell, Sierra Club director for the Coal Free Future for Washington campaign. "We are leaving coal pollution in the past as we continue building the clean energy economy of today. We thank the Governor, TransAlta, Sen. Rockefeller, Rep. Liias, the people of Lewis County and the Environmental Priorities Coalition for their efforts in achieving this historic agreement."

"Following on the heels of the watershed agreement to end Oregon's coal-fired generation by 2020, 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," said NW Energy Coalition executive director Sara Patton.

"This agreement reinforces our responsibility to phase out coal-burning at the TransAlta plant and protect Washington families from the harmful health effects of burning coal for electricity. It also reinforces our responsibility to do this in a way that strengthens the local economy and takes care of the community," said Earth Ministry executive director LeeAnne Beres.

"This agreement provides tens of millions of dollars to Lewis County for community economic development and local energy efficiency improvement projects that will create good, new local jobs," said Climate Solutions policy specialist Jessica Finn Coven. "It provides Washington state

with tens of millions of dollars to spur clean energy technology development and keep our state competitive in the clean energy economy of today. And it provides certainty of an orderly and fair transition beyond coal for everyone involved.”

Washington Environmental Council executive director Joan Crooks said the agreement “ensures that there’s a plan in place to clean up the toxic waste at the plant and prepare the site for future economic development. It also provides for near-term pollution reductions to help protect Washington families.”

Crooks concluded: “In Washington, we know that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. We look forward to working with TransAlta, the community of Lewis County and our state legislators to put this agreement into law.”

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**The Environmental Priorities Coalition is a network of 24 leading environmental groups in Washington state that believe we can have a strong economy that provides everyone with the opportunity to prosper and a clean, healthy and safe environment for ourselves and our children.**

**Founded in 2003, the Environmental Priorities Coalition selects priority issues each legislative session that are important to protecting public health and welfare.**