



Centralia - Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

September 11, 2026

Bobbak Talebi
Washington State Department of Ecology
Southwest Region Office
P.O. Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-7775

RE: Support for TransAlta Centralia Coal-to-Natural Gas Conversion Project

Dear Mr. Talebi:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed conversion of TransAlta's Centralia generating facility from coal to natural gas and for the regulatory approvals necessary to allow the project to move forward.

For more than five decades, the Centralia generating facility has been an important part of the economic and energy infrastructure of Lewis County and Washington State. TransAlta has provided family-wage employment, supported local businesses and contractors, contributed significantly to the local tax base, and invested in our communities during a period of substantial economic transition.

The proposed conversion represents a practical next step in that transition. It makes productive use of existing energy infrastructure while maintaining dispatchable generating capacity that can help support electrical reliability during periods of peak demand. At the same time, conversion from coal to natural gas will substantially reduce greenhouse-gas emissions and most toxic air emissions associated with the facility's historic coal-fired operations.

For Lewis County, this project is also about economic continuity. The transition provides an opportunity to preserve employment, contracting activity, investment and economic activity associated with the Centralia facility rather than prematurely abandoning a major piece of existing regional infrastructure. Our community understands the importance of adapting to a changing energy economy, but we also believe that transition should be thoughtful, responsible and attentive to the economic well-being of the workers, families and businesses affected by it.

TransAlta has also demonstrated a significant commitment to the region beyond the operation of the plant. Investments associated with the Centralia transition have supported education, energy efficiency, economic development and community initiatives throughout Lewis County. Continued operation of the facility under the proposed conversion provides an opportunity to build upon that partnership while moving toward a cleaner generation profile.

The Chamber believes economic development, environmental stewardship and reliable energy do not have to be competing objectives. The Centralia conversion offers an opportunity to advance all three. It reduces emissions compared with continued coal generation, maintains an important source of reliable electricity, utilizes infrastructure already in place, and supports jobs and economic activity in a community that has already experienced significant transition in its natural-resource and energy sectors.

We recognize and respect the Department of Ecology's responsibility to ensure that the project complies with applicable environmental and air-quality standards. We support a rigorous, timely and predictable permitting process and believe the proposed project, with appropriate mitigation and regulatory oversight, represents a responsible path forward for the Centralia facility.

For these reasons, the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors respectfully encourages the Department of Ecology to approve the necessary permits and allow the TransAlta Centralia conversion project to proceed.

This project represents more than the future of a single generating facility. It represents continued investment in Lewis County, continued employment and economic opportunity for our residents, greater energy reliability for Washington, and a pragmatic transition toward a cleaner energy future.

Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide the perspective of our region's business community.

Sincerely,

Kevin Carns

Executive Director

Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the Board of Directors