

New guideline ruling creates framework for implementation of coal phase-out

Essen/Cologne, 24 March 2021

RWE Power welcomes the fact that the guideline ruling has now laid down the next steps for all open-cast mines in the Rhineland in their implementation of the statutory coal phase-out. It ensures orderly operation of the Tagebau Hambach and Tagebau Inden opencast mines, which will cease to extract coal by 2029. The Tagebau Garzweiler opencast mine can continue to supply the remaining power plants and refineries until coal-based power generation ends. This also offers the employees of RWE Power and its contractors in the Rhenish mining area a predictable situation going forward. Clear framework conditions also benefit the structural transformation and the expansion of renewable energies in the region, which RWE Power supports with numerous projects. At the same time, the guideline ruling also contains stipulations that go beyond the basis on which current planning was carried out and these thus represent a considerable challenge for the company's opencast mine planning.

In July 2020, the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) and the Federal Council (Bundesrat) passed the Coal Phase-out Act, which is based on the recommendations of the Commission on Growth, Structural Change and Employment. The guideline ruling implements the resulting requirements for the state's lignite planning and confirms on the basis of a meta-study that the entire Garzweiler extraction field is still required by the energy industry.

RWE already decommissioned the first power plant unit at the end of last year. Three more with a combined 900 megawatts will follow this year, and next year further plants with a total of around 1,600 megawatts. Briquetting will also cease in the Rhineland in 2022. Further decommissioning of plants in the subsequent years will follow. RWE is thus phasing out coal as agreed: step by step.

"With this guideline ruling, the state government is creating a framework for the implementation of the coal phase-out, which was decided upon last year after a lengthy process. This is an important step for our company and our employees. At the same time, requirements have been set that represent a considerable challenge for our opencast mining planning. It remains our goal to shape the coal phase-out in a responsible manner and to involve ourselves constructively in the process of structural transformation.", says Dr Frank Weigand, CEO of RWE Power AG.



RWE

Individual provisions of the guideline ruling mean that the current opencast mining planning will have to be significantly modified. At a minimum of 400 metres or up to 500 metres, the distance between individual villages and the mining edge must be significantly greater than the current planning provides for. In this way, the state government wants to improve the future prospects of the villages of Kaulhausen and Kückhoven in particular. In addition to lower coal production, this will result in the plans for relandscaping once the opencast mining has come to an end having to be modified. The restoration of the A 61 motorway will also be carried out differently than previously planned.

Although the necessity of the Tagebau Garzweiler opencast mine for the energy industry was confirmed, the village of Keyenberg is not permitted to be used for mining until 2026. This is to give the residents more time to relocate. In compliance with this specification, RWE Power will now initially focus on coal production in the southern part of the mining area and will begin mining coal at the village of Keyenberg only after that. Relocation, which is already ongoing, will continue as planned to avoid any uncertainty for those who have already prepared and planned for it.

The concept submitted by the company for the rehabilitation of the Tagebau Hambach opencast mine that includes the creation of an opencast lake and the preservation of Hambach Forest is confirmed in the guideline ruling. RWE aims to start filling the lake as early as possible, from 2030, so that a large lake area can be available as early as 2040. In this context, the company welcomes the state's declaration to work at the federal level to create the conditions for a rapid filling of the Hambach opencast lake.

"We now have clear goals and tasks for our long-term planning. However, they do significantly further restrict our scope to develop opencast mining. Nevertheless, we will immediately begin to consistently and reliably forge ahead with the planning, licensing and technical implementation in accordance with the adjusted specifications," announces Dr Lars Kulik, Member of the Executive Board of RWE Power AG.

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RWE Power AG

RWE Power AG, Essen/Cologne, is responsible for electricity generation from lignite and nuclear energy within the RWE Group with its approximately 11,000 employees. It operates three opencast lignite mines in the Rhineland. The production is mainly used to generate electricity in the company's own power plants. The lignite is also refined into solid fuels and filter materials. In addition, the company manages the operation, post-operation and dismantling of RWE's nuclear facilities. The power plants in this business area provide a capacity of around 11 gigawatts.

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