



## **PRESS RELEASE & STATEMENT**

*For Immediate Release*

### **CANCELLATION OF EARLY RETIREMENT OF CIREBON-1 COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT: CRISIS OF COMMITMENT, TRANSPARENCY, AND PUBLIC HEALTH IN INDONESIA'S ENERGY TRANSITION**

WALHI West Java expresses deep concern and strong condemnation of the Indonesian government's decision to cancel the early retirement plan for the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant. This decision confirms that the national energy transition agenda remains in a crisis of commitment, transparency, and disregard for public health.

The Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant was previously positioned as a pilot project for the early retirement of coal-fired power plants within the framework of Indonesia's energy transition and emission reduction commitments. However, its cancellation was carried out unilaterally, without any public explanation that could be verified, thus demonstrating that Indonesia's energy transition remains fragile, unaccountable, and subject to the interests of the coal industry.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and PT Cirebon Electric Power (CEP), which had previously publicly declared their commitment to the early retirement of Cirebon-1 alongside the Indonesian government, have remained silent on the cancellation. This silence does not absolve the ADB and CEP, both as funding institutions and as owners and operators of the power plant, of their responsibility for the environmental and public health consequences, as well as the failure to implement the energy transition commitments they had previously declared.

## **The Dominance of Economic-Cost Logic in the Cancellation Decision**

WALHI West Java assesses that the cancellation of the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant was driven by the dominance of short-term economic-cost logic, which only calculates the financial feasibility and technical age of assets, but ignores the social, ecological, and public health costs.

This approach systematically ignores the realities experienced by residents living near the power plant: air pollution, respiratory health problems, deterioration of coastal environmental quality, and the economic burden on households due to diseases caused by coal emissions. Losses due to climate disasters caused by coal-fired power plant emissions. These costs are never included in the energy decision balance sheet, so the state unfairly transfers the burden of power plant costs (which should be borne by the operator in accordance with *the polluter pays principle*) to the community, while the economic benefits continue to be enjoyed by a handful of parties.

## **Continued Operation of Coal-Fired Power Plants: Unending Emissions**

Canceling early retirement means extending the operation of Cirebon-1, which directly prolongs greenhouse gas emissions and hazardous pollutants. The [\*Toxic Twenty\*](#) report ranks the Cirebon power plant complex—including Cirebon-1—as one of the most toxic power plants in Indonesia, with the third most serious impact on health and the environment.

This fact shows that the cancellation decision is not a neutral one, but rather a conscious decision to maintain a major source of pollution amid the climate crisis and public health crisis.

## **Data Secrecy and Risk Assessment that Disregards Residents**

To date, the government has not transparently disclosed the data and studies that formed the basis for the cancellation of the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant. The following are not available to the public: (1) health and social risk assessments for affected residents, (2) analysis of

of the continued environmental impact of extending operations, (3) and calculations of long-term social and health costs.

The studies used are internal to PLN or the government, without involving the perspectives of affected residents and civil society organizations. Yet this decision has a direct impact on the lives, health, and safety of the community. An energy transition carried out without data transparency and public participation is an undemocratic and unfair transition.

### **Ignoring the Principle of *Just Transition***

This cancellation also demonstrates the state's failure to apply the principle of *just transition*. Energy transition should not only be about changing energy sources, but also ensuring: protection of the health, environment, and livelihoods of residents living near coal-fired power plants who have already been affected, effective compensation and recovery, and guarantees of social justice for affected communities.

Without an inclusive *just transition* framework, clean energy policies risk becoming merely technocratic projects, while the social and ecological impacts continue to be borne by the community.

### **A Dangerous Precedent and the Weakness of the PLTU Retirement Roadmap**

WALHI West Java emphasizes that the cancellation of the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant is a dangerous precedent that highlights the weakness of the national coal-fired power plant retirement roadmap. If even a pilot project can be canceled without transparency and accountability, then the entire agenda for the early retirement of coal-fired power plants in Indonesia lacks policy and legal certainty.

The national electricity policy through the latest RUPTL, RUKN, RUEN, and KEN plans clearly maintains coal-fired power plants as the main source of national electricity. These planning documents do not contain a clear roadmap for when coal-fired power plants, including those that have been operating for a very long time and are finding it increasingly difficult to reduce emissions, will be permanently shut down. Instead of pointing towards a phase-out of coal, this policy reflects a regression in the national energy transition policy, in which

dependence on fossil fuels continues to be maintained through the extension of PLTU operating periods. This approach ignores the fact that the impacts of the climate crisis are already being felt in various regions of Indonesia, triggering ecological disasters and enormous socio-economic losses. The state is consciously delaying its climate responsibility and increasing the risk of future environmental and public health crises.

This situation underscores the urgency of establishing strong, legally binding coal-fired power plant retirement regulations that prioritize public safety, rather than *ad hoc* policies that can be easily changed by short-term economic interests.

**WALHI West Java demands:**

1. WALHI West Java demands that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) stop all financing in the name of energy transition, including electricity networks, as long as there is no clear, legally binding, and publicly monitored *phase-out* of coal-fired power plants. The ADB must not use the narrative of energy transition to legitimize the continuation of coal-fired power plants, which prolong the climate crisis and energy injustice.
2. Full disclosure of the reasons for the cancellation of the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant, including the publication of data, risk assessments, and calculations of the social and health costs that directly impact residents affected by the Cirebon coal-fired power plant.
3. The cessation of a narrow economic-cost approach in energy policy, by including social, public health, and environmental impacts as the main basis for decision-making.
4. WALHI West Java emphasizes that PT Cirebon Electric Power (CEP) remains fully responsible for the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant as a problematic asset, regardless of the cancellation of the ETM scheme. CEP is obligated to implement the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant in accordance with the commitments previously made, rather than maintaining operations under the pretext of policy changes. Energy transition should not be used as an excuse to avoid corporate responsibility and sacrifice the health and safety of citizens.
5. The implementation of the principles of a *just transition* in a tangible and inclusive manner, with effective protection and recovery for communities affected by the Cirebon Power Plant.

6. Establishment of strong and legally binding regulations on power plant retirement, with a clear, transparent, and publicly monitorable roadmap.

The cancellation of the early retirement of the Cirebon-1 coal-fired power plant is not only a policy failure, but also reflects the state's lack of seriousness in protecting public health and implementing a just energy transition. WALHI West Java emphasizes that without transparency, justice, and strong regulations, Indonesia's energy transition will only prolong the ecological and public health crisis.

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