

For immediate release

Decarbonization of coal-fired power plant: Minister Thekla Walker (from the Alliance 90/The Greens party) catches up on the progress being made by the Koehler Group on its construction projects

- **The Koehler Group showed how it is decarbonizing its Oberkirch site with a total investment of over 70 million euros**
- **The energy-intensive family business has made investments in renewable energy for over ten years and is a pioneer in playing a sustainable part in Germany's energy transition**
- **The Minister of the Environment, Climate Protection, and Energy welcomed the Koehler Group's ambitious environmental and climate strategy**

Oberkirch, 01/25/2024 – The Minister of the Environment, Climate Protection, and Energy of the State of Baden-Württemberg, Thekla Walker, visited the Koehler Group's headquarters in Oberkirch today in order to learn more about the company's environmental and climate strategy. The family business, which employs around 2,500 people worldwide, has been investing in renewable energy for over ten years already. Its existing coal-fired power plant in Oberkirch is currently being converted in order to use environmentally friendly biomass, with the work slated for completion by the fall of 2024. This change is expected to reduce future CO₂ emissions at the site by 150,000 metric tons a year.

Decarbonizing the coal-fired power plant in Oberkirch as a fundamental part of the company's environmental and climate strategy

Decarbonizing energy and steam generation is part of the Koehler Group's climate strategy. In the long term, both Germany and the EU are striving to become climate neutral. The EU is aiming to reach this milestone by 2050, while Germany is targeting 2045. The Koehler Group has set even more ambitious targets for itself and is aiming to generate more energy from renewable sources than is required for paper production by 2030. In order to take biomass and use it to produce the energy required to make a variety of special paper products in Oberkirch going forward, the Koehler Group has invested over 70 million euros. The existing power plant, which was built in 1986, is being adapted for the new fuel through various conversion measures. In addition, two collection points for unloading trucks and corresponding silos will be built. In future, Koehler will use wood chips, green waste, and mill residue as fuel. The advantage of using biomass as a fuel is not only the fact that it is carbon neutral, but also that it is widely available. In fact, only natural wood that comes from the surrounding region and that is at the end of its usability as a material will be used. Moreover, the short distances involved in the corresponding logistics mean that the Koehler Group will be reducing its carbon footprint even more.

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Minister Walker impressed by the Koehler Group's forward-looking plans

During a tour of the power plant construction site, Hartmut Felsch, the mill director at the Koehler Paper site in Oberkirch, provided an update on the current construction progress. Minister Walker appeared impressed: "The Koehler Group is a great example of how sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand. They're well on their way to leaving fossil fuels behind and adopting renewable energies instead, all while securing their own future as a result. In other words, the Koehler Group is showing how energy-intensive companies in the business hub of Baden-Württemberg can tackle this transition successfully as well." In short, sustainability pays off in the long term.

Dr. Stefan Karrer, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Koehler Group, had the following to add: "Sustainability is not a fad for us, but a necessity instead. It's the way that we can preserve and develop positive environmental, social, and economic conditions not just for us, but for future generations in particular as well. By decarbonizing our power plant in Oberkirch, we're not just taking a big step towards becoming climate neutral as a company, but also towards helping Germany achieve climate neutrality as a country." Converting the power plant to biomass will reduce emissions by over 150,000 metric tons of CO₂ per year at the Oberkirch site and is another step towards achieving the goals set out in the Koehler Group's environmental and climate strategy.

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Figure: Thekla Walker, Minister of the Environment, Climate Protection, and Energy of the State of Baden-Württemberg, learned more about the progress on the conversion project for the company's coal-fired power plant during her visit to the Koehler Group's facilities. Left to right: Oberkirch Mill Director Hartmut Felsch, Koehler Group CEO Kai Furler, CFO Frank Lendowski, COO Dr. Stefan Karrer, and Mayor of Oberkirch Gregor Bühler visiting the construction site in Oberkirch.

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2030 Sustainability Strategy

By decarbonizing its power plant in Oberkirch, the Koehler Group is helping achieve sustainable development goals in the area of climate and environmental protection. By using biomass as a fuel in the future, the company will be cutting its emissions by 150,000 metric tons of CO₂ per year.

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About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbon-less paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry since 2019. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 67% in 2022, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.3 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, Koehler is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

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