

TRANSALTA CORP
Form 40-F
March 02, 2018

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 40-F

[Check one]

REGISTRATION STATEMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 12 OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

OR

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13(a) OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended

December 31, 2017

Commission file number

001-15214

TRANSALTA CORPORATION

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

Not applicable

(Translation of Registrant's name into English (if applicable))

Canada

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(Province or other jurisdiction of incorporation or organization)

4911

(Primary Standard Industrial Classification Code Number (if applicable))

Not Applicable

(I.R.S Employer Identification Number (if applicable))

110-12th Avenue S.W., Box 1900, Station M ,

Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2P 2M1,

(403) 267-7110

(Address and telephone number of Registrant's principal executive offices)

CT Corporation System, 111 8th Avenue, 13th Floor,

New York, New York, 10011, (212) 894-8400

(Name, address (including zip code) and telephone number (including area code)

of agent for service in the United States)

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Indicate the number of outstanding shares of each of the issuer's classes of capital or common stock as of the close of the period covered by the annual report:

At December 31, 2017, 287,903,467 common shares were issued and outstanding.

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant by filing the information contained in this Form is also thereby furnishing the information to the Commission pursuant to Rule 12g3-2(b) under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (the Exchange Act). If Yes is marked, indicate the file number assigned to the Registrant in connection with such Rule.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Exchange Act during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports) and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is an emerging growth company as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company that prepares its financial statements in accordance with U.S. GAAP, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

Yes No

The term new or revised financial accounting standard refers to any update issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board to its Accounting Standards Codification after April 5, 2012.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

The documents, forming part of this Form 40-F, are incorporated by reference into the following registration statements under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended.

| <u>Form</u> | <u>Registration No.</u> |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| S-8 | 333-72454 |
| S-8 | 333-101470 |
| F-10 | 333-215608 |

**CONSOLIDATED AUDITED ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
AND MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS**

A. Consolidated Audited Annual Financial Statements

For consolidated audited annual financial statements, including the report of independent chartered accountants with respect thereto, see Exhibit 13.3 incorporated by reference herein.

B. Management's Discussion and Analysis

For management's discussion and analysis, see Exhibit 13.2 incorporated by reference herein.

DISCLOSURE CONTROLS AND PROCEDURES

As required by Rule 13a-15 under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (Exchange Act), management has evaluated, with the participation of our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, the effectiveness of our disclosure controls and procedures as of the end of the period covered by this report. Disclosure controls and procedures refer to controls and other procedures designed to ensure that information required to be disclosed in the reports we file or submit under the Exchange Act are recorded, processed, summarized, and reported within the time periods specified in the rules and forms of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Disclosure controls and procedures include, without limitation, controls and procedures designed to ensure that information required to be disclosed by us in our reports that we file or submit under the Exchange Act are accumulated and communicated to management, including our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer, as appropriate, to allow timely decisions regarding our required disclosure. In designing and evaluating our disclosure controls and procedures, management recognizes that any controls and procedures, no matter how well designed and operated, can provide only reasonable assurance of achieving the desired control objectives, and management was required to apply its judgment in evaluating and implementing possible controls and procedures.

There has been no change in the internal control over financial reporting during the period covered by this report that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, our internal control over financial reporting. Based on the foregoing evaluation, our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer have concluded that, as of December 31, 2017, the end of the period covered by this report, our disclosure controls and procedures were effective at a reasonable assurance level.

MANAGEMENT'S ANNUAL REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING

Management is responsible for establishing and maintaining adequate internal control over financial reporting.

Internal control over financial reporting refers to a process designed by, or under the supervision of, our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer and effected by our board of directors, management and other personnel, to provide reasonable assurance regarding the reliability of financial reporting and the preparation of financial statements for external purposes in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and includes those policies and procedures that:

- pertain to the maintenance of records that in reasonable detail accurately and fairly reflect the transactions and dispositions of our assets;

- provide reasonable assurance that transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and that our receipts and expenditures are being made only in accordance with authorizations of our management and members of our board of directors; and

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- provide reasonable assurance regarding prevention or timely detection of unauthorized acquisition, use, or disposition of our assets that could have a material effect on our financial statements.

Management evaluated the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017 using the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO) 2013 framework. Management concluded that our internal control over financial reporting was effective as of December 31, 2017. Certain matters relating to the scope of management's evaluation and limitations of management's conclusions are described below. See Limitations and Scope of Management's Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting.

Our independent registered public accounting firm, Ernst & Young LLP, has issued an attestation report on the effectiveness of our internal control over financial reporting as of December 31, 2017. For Ernst & Young LLP's report see page F3 of the Consolidated Audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2017 filed as Exhibit 13.3 and incorporated by reference herein, under the heading Report of Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm.

There has been no change in the internal control over financial reporting during the year covered by this report that has materially affected, or is reasonably likely to materially affect, our internal control over financial reporting.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF MANAGEMENT'S

REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING

Internal control over financial reporting cannot provide absolute assurance of achieving financial reporting objectives because of its inherent limitations. Internal control over financial reporting is a process that involves human diligence and compliance and is subject to lapses in judgment and breakdowns resulting from human failures. Internal control over financial reporting also can be circumvented by collusion or improper overrides. Because of such limitations, there is a risk that material misstatements may not be prevented or detected on a timely basis by internal control over financial reporting. However, these inherent limitations are known features of the financial reporting process, and it is possible to design safeguards into the process to reduce, though not eliminate, this risk.

TransAlta Corporation (TransAlta or the Company) proportionately consolidates the accounts of the Sheerness and Genesee 3 joint operations (the Excluded Entities), in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Management does not have the contractual ability to assess the internal controls of these Excluded Entities. Management's conclusion regarding the effectiveness of internal controls does not extend to the internal controls at the transactional level of these Excluded Entities. Accordingly, management's evaluation of the Company's internal control over financial reporting did not include an evaluation of the internal controls of any of the Excluded Entities, and management's conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the Company's internal control over financial reporting does not extend to the internal controls of any of the Excluded Entities.

The 2017 consolidated financial statements of TransAlta, in accordance with EITF 00-1, included CDN\$624 million and CDN\$550 million of total and net assets, respectively, as of December 31, 2017, and CDN\$160 million and CDN\$9 million of revenues and net loss, respectively, for the year then ended related to Excluded Entities. Once the financial information is obtained from these Excluded Entities it falls within the scope of TransAlta's internal control framework.

AUDIT COMMITTEE FINANCIAL EXPERT

TransAlta's board of directors has determined that it has one audit committee financial expert serving on its Audit and Risk Committee (the ARC). Ms. Beverlee F. Park has been determined to be an audit committee financial expert, within the meaning of Section 407 of the United States Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (Sarbanes-Oxley), and is independent, as that term is defined by the New York Stock Exchange's (NYSE) listing standards applicable to the Registrant. Under Securities and Exchange Commission rules, the designation of persons as audit committee financial experts does not make them experts for any other purpose, impose any duties, obligations or liability on them that are greater than those imposed on members of their committee and the board of directors who do not carry this designation or affect the duties, obligations or liability of any other member of their committee.

CODE OF ETHICS

TransAlta has adopted a code of ethics as part of its Corporate Code of Conduct that applies to all employees and officers which has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition, the Registrant has adopted a code of conduct applicable to all directors of the Company, a separate financial code of conduct which applies to all financial management employees and an Energy Trading code of conduct for our employees working within energy marketing. Our codes of conduct are available on our Internet website at www.transalta.com. There has been no waiver of the codes granted during the 2017 fiscal year.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTANT FEES AND SERVICES

For the years ended December 31, 2017 and December 31, 2016, Ernst & Young LLP and its affiliates were paid CDN\$2,799,884 and CDN\$3,083,145, respectively, as detailed below:

Ernst & Young LLP

| Year Ended Dec. 31 | 2017 | | 2016 | |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Audit Fees | CDN\$ | 2,708,884 | CDN\$ | 2,680,186 |
| Audit-related fees | CDN\$ | 91,000 | CDN\$ | 363,959 |
| Tax fees | | 0 | CDN\$ | 39,000 |
| All other fees | | 0 | | 0 |
| Total | CDN\$ | 2,799,884 | CDN\$ | 3,083,145 |

All amounts are in Canadian dollars unless otherwise stated.

No other audit firms provided audit services in 2017 or 2016.

The nature of each category of fees is described below:

Audit Fees

Audit fees were paid for professional services rendered by the auditors for the audit of our annual financial statements or services provided in connection with statutory and regulatory filings or engagements, including the translation from English to French of our financial statements and other documents. Total audit fees for 2017 include payments of CDN\$1,481,895 related to 2016 and total audit fees for 2016 include payments related to 2015 in the amount of CDN\$1,384,384.

Audit-Related Fees

The audit-related fees in 2017 and 2016 were primarily for work performed by Ernst & Young LLP in relation to compliance and regulatory reporting and miscellaneous accounting advice provided to the Corporation.

Tax Fees

Nil.

All Other Fees

Nil.

Pre-Approval Policies and Procedures

The ARC has considered whether the provision of services other than audit services is compatible with maintaining the auditors' independence. In May 2002, the ARC adopted a policy that prohibits TransAlta from engaging the auditors for prohibited categories of non-audit services and requires pre-approval of the ARC for other permissible categories of non-audit services, such categories being determined under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. This policy also provides that the Chair of the ARC may approve permissible non-audit services during the quarter and report such approval to the ARC at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Percentage of Services Approved by the ARC

For the year ended December 31, 2017, none of the services described above were approved by the ARC pursuant to paragraph (c)(7)(i)(C) of Rule 2-01 of Regulation S-X.

OFF-BALANCE SHEET ARRANGEMENTS

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TransAlta currently has no off-balance sheet arrangements. See page M35 of Exhibit 13.2, incorporated by reference herein under the heading Unconsolidated Structured Entities or Arrangements .

TABULAR DISCLOSURE OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

See page M33 of Exhibit 13.2, incorporated by reference herein and page F92 under the heading Commitments and Contingencies of Exhibit 13.3, all incorporated by reference herein.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

We have a separately-designated standing ARC made up of independent directors. The members of the ARC are:

Alan J. Fohrer (Chair)

Rona H. Ambrose

John P. Dielwart

Timothy W. Faithfull

Yakout Mansour

Beverlee F. Park

MINE SAFETY

The information concerning mine safety violations or other regulatory matters required by Section 1503(a) of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act is included in Exhibit 13.1, incorporated herein, under the heading Business of TransAlta U.S. Coal Business Segment .

FORWARD-LOOKING INFORMATION

This Form 40-F, the documents incorporated herein by reference, and other reports and filings of the Company made with the securities regulatory authorities, include forward-looking statements. All forward-looking statements are based on assumptions relating to information available at the time the assumption was made and on management's experience and perception of historical trends, current conditions and expected future developments, as well as other factors deemed appropriate in the circumstances. Forward-looking statements are not facts, but only predictions and generally can be identified by the use of statements that include phrases such as may, will, could, would, shall, believe, expect, estimate, anticipate, intend, plan, forecast, foresee, potential, enable, continue or other comparable terminology. These guarantees of our future performance and are subject to risks, uncertainties and other important factors that could cause our actual performance to be materially different from that projected.

In particular, this Form 40-F contains forward-looking statements pertaining to: our business and anticipated future financial performance; our success in executing on our growth projects; the timing and the completion of growth projects, including major projects such as the Brazeau Pumped Storage Project, and their attendant costs; our estimated spend on growth and sustaining capital and productivity projects; expectations in terms of the cost of operations, capital spend, and maintenance, and the variability of those costs; the conversion of our coal fired units to natural gas, and the timing thereof; the form of any definitive agreement with TransAlta regarding the construction of a pipeline; the terms of the proposed Normal Course Issuer Bid, including timing, number of shares to be repurchased pursuant to the Normal Course Issuer Bid, and the acceptance thereof by the Toronto Stock Exchange; the mothballing of certain units; the impact of certain hedges on future earnings and cash

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flows; estimates of fuel supply and demand conditions and the costs of procuring fuel; expectations for demand for electricity in both the short-term and long-term, and the resulting impact on electricity prices; the impact of load growth, increased capacity, and natural gas costs on power prices; expectations in respect of generation availability, capacity, and production; expectations regarding the role different energy sources will play in meeting future energy needs; expected financing of our capital expenditures; expected governmental regulatory regimes and legislation, including the change to a capacity market in Alberta and the expected impact on us and the timing of the implementation of such regimes and regulations, as well as the cost of complying with resulting regulations and laws; our trading strategy and the risks involved in these strategies; estimates of future tax rates, future tax expense, and the adequacy of tax provisions; accounting estimates; anticipated growth rates in our markets; our expectations relating to the outcome of existing or potential legal and contractual claims, regulatory investigations, and disputes; expectations regarding the renewal of collective bargaining agreements; expectations for the ability to access capital markets at reasonable

terms; the estimated impact of changes in interest rates and the value of the Canadian dollar relative to the U.S. and other currencies in locations where we do business; the monitoring of our exposure to liquidity risk; expectations in respect to the global economic environment and growing scrutiny by investors relating to sustainability performance; and our credit practices.

Factors that may adversely impact our forward-looking statements include risks relating to: fluctuations in demand, market prices and the availability of fuel supplies required to generate electricity; demand for electricity and our ability to contract our generation for prices that will provide expected returns; the regulatory and political environments in the jurisdictions in which we operate; environmental requirements and changes in, or liabilities under, these requirements; changes in general economic conditions including interest rates; operational risks involving our facilities, including unplanned outages at such facilities; disruptions in the transmission and distribution of electricity; the effects of weather; disruptions in the source of fuels, water or wind required to operate our facilities; natural and man-made disasters; the threat of domestic terrorism and cyberattacks; equipment failure and our ability to carry out or have completed the repairs in a cost-effective manner or timely manner; commodity risk management; industry risk and competition; fluctuations in the value of foreign currencies and foreign political risks; the need for additional financing; structural subordination of securities; counterparty credit risk; insurance coverage; our provision for income taxes; legal, regulatory, and contractual disputes and proceedings involving the Corporation, including as it pertains to establishing commercial operations at the South Hedland Power Station; outcomes of investigations and disputes; reliance on key personnel; labour relations matters; and development projects and acquisitions, including delays in the development of the Brazeau Pumped Storage Project. The foregoing risk factors, among others, are described in further detail under the heading *Risk Factors* in this Form 40-F and in the documents incorporated by reference in this Form 40-F, including our Management's Discussion and Analysis for the year ended December 31, 2017.

Readers are urged to consider these factors carefully in evaluating the forward-looking statements and are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements included in this document are made only as of the date hereof and we do not undertake to publicly update these forward-looking statements to reflect new information, future events or otherwise, except as required by applicable laws. In light of these risks, uncertainties and assumptions, the forward-looking events might occur to a different extent or at a different time than we have described or might not occur. We cannot assure that projected results or events will be achieved.

DOCUMENTS FILED AS PART OF THIS REPORT AND EXHIBITS

The following items are specifically incorporated by reference in, and form an integral part of, this filing on Form 40-F:

- 13.1 TransAlta Corporation Annual Information Form for the year ended December 31, 2017.
- 13.2 Management's Discussion and Analysis for the year ended December 31, 2017.
- 13.3 Consolidated Audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2017.
- 13.4 Management's Annual Report on Internal Control over Financial Reporting, (included on page F2 of Exhibit 13.3 filed herewith).
- 13.5 Independent Auditors' Report of Registered Public Accounting Firm, (included on page F4 of Exhibit 13.3 filed herewith).
- 23.1 Consent of Ernst & Young LLP Chartered Accountants.
- 31.1 Certification of President and Chief Executive Officer pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
- 31.2 Certification of Chief Financial Officer pursuant to Section 302 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
- 32.1 Certification of President and Chief Executive Officer pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.
- 32.2 Certification of Chief Financial Officer pursuant to Section 906 of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002.

UNDERTAKING

TransAlta undertakes to make available, in person or by telephone, representatives to respond to inquiries made by the Commission staff, and to furnish promptly, when requested to do so by the Commission staff, information relating to: the securities registered pursuant to Form 40-F; the securities in relation to which the obligation to file an annual report on Form 40-F arises; or transactions in said securities.

CONSENT TO SERVICES OF PROCESS

The registrant has previously filed a Form F-X in connection with the class of securities in relation to which the obligation to file this report arises. Any change to the name or address of the agent for service of process of the registrant shall be communicated promptly to the Commission by an amendment to the Form F-X referencing the file number of the registrant.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Exchange Act, the Registrant certifies that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form 40-F and has duly caused this annual report to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereto duly authorized, in the City of Calgary, Province of Alberta, Canada.

TRANSALTA CORPORATION

/s/ Donald Tremblay
Donald Tremblay
Chief Financial Officer

Dated: March 1, 2018

EXHIBIT INDEX

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