



# Kentucky's Toxic Tragedy:

## Coal ash is America's largest unregulated waste stream

Contrary to much rhetoric, coal ash actually contains numerous toxic heavy metals in high concentrations. These are extremely hazardous to human health and the environment.

### STATES CAN'T DO IT ALONE

Coal ash is a nationwide problem at the intersection of energy, water, waste disposal, environmental justice, and public health. State programs fail to protect public health from toxic coal ash pollution. States need minimum federal standards to adequately address this problem.

### EPA NEEDS TO SET REGULATIONS

Congressional attempts to write coal ash regulation were found inadequate to protect public health and the environment by two Congressional Research Service Reports.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

Urge your senators and representative to oppose any proposed legislation that supersedes EPA's authority to set and enforce regulations of toxic coal ash. A federal minimum regulation model has worked for many types of air and water pollution and can work for coal ash, if we let it.



Kentucky is home to **43 coal ash impoundments** containing at least **20 billion gallons of coal combustion waste**.

That's enough to cover **46,706 football fields one foot deep**.

- ✓ After the 2008 coal ash disaster in Kingston, TN, the Environmental Protection Agency set out to rate all coal ash impoundments nationwide based on the threat they pose to nearby communities and infrastructure.
- ✓ According to the EPA, **Kentucky has the most number of coal ash dams rated High Hazard in the nation, meaning they would likely cause loss of life in the event of a Kingston-like dam failure:**
  - ✓ **Eight would cause loss of life** in the event of dam failure.
  - ✓ **Six are Significant Hazard and would damage** property and infrastructure.
  - ✓ Nineteen are not yet rated.

### Kentucky's Communities and Waters Need Coal Ash Protection

According to the reports "State of Failure" by Earthjustice and "Closing the Floodgates" by the Environmental Integrity Project:

- ✓ **A professional engineer did not design over half of Kentucky's impoundments.**
- ✓ **All of Kentucky's power plants operate without a Clean Water Act permit**, seriously endangering nearby waterways for local communities and wildlife.
  - Much of KY's coal ash is dumped into unlined ponds or pits, located close to waterways. **Toxins readily leach into drinking water supplies.**
  - As of August 2011 **regulators had inspected only 28%** of Kentucky's coal ash dams in the last 5 years.
  - **Kentucky fails to protect the public** from coal ash by imposing basic safeguards at coal ash dumps.
  - Kentucky regulations **lack requirements** for groundwater monitoring, liners for impoundments, financial assurance, prohibition of constructing coal ash impoundments in the water table, emergency action plans and geotechnical/engineering inspections by operators.

To learn more about coal ash and if it threatens the places you care about visit [www.SoutheastCoalAsh.org](http://www.SoutheastCoalAsh.org)



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