



Virginia'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.



Virginia is home to **32 coal ash impoundments** containing at least **4.4 billion gallons** of waste.

That's enough to cover **10,441 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 Environmental Protection Agency, **Virginia's ash impoundments threaten local communities.**
 - ✓ **Five are rated Significant Hazard**, meaning a dam failure would damage property and infrastructure.
 - ✓ Two are in poor condition.
- ✓ **Because Virginia utilities have failed to provide adequate information to the Environmental Protection Agency on over half the power plants in Virginia, the public has no way to know:**
 - ✓ The total amount of toxic coal ash stored at each site.
 - ✓ The hazard posed by coal ash dams to local communities and waterways.
 - ✓ The condition and stability of ash impoundment dams.
- ✓ **\$1.5 Million of damage** has been caused to fish, wildlife and human communities by Virginia's two documented coal ash damage cases at Clinch River and Adair Run. Other instances of contamination have not yet been declared damage cases.

Virginia'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:

There are **no limits on the amount of toxic heavy metals** Virginia's power plants are allowed to release into public waters seriously endangering nearby waterways for local communities and wildlife.

- Much of VA'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 36% of Virginia's coal ash dams** in the last 5 years.
- **Virginia fails to protect the public** from coal ash by imposing basic safeguards at coal ash dumps.
- Virginia regulations **lack requirements** for groundwater monitoring, liners for impoundments, financial assurance of coal ash impoundments, emergency action plans and inundation mapping, regular inspections by operators or regulators, geotechnical/engineering inspections, and meeting design specifications.

To learn more about coal ash and if it threatens the places you care about visit www.SouthEastCoalAsh.org



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