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The Coal Ash Spill at TVA's Kingston Facility

Webinar Presentation

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About Us

- **Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) has been a leading advocate for clean, responsible energy choices that better our communities, our region and our world for over 20 years.**

- **Since its formal inception in 1985, SACE has grown from a small group of individuals into a dynamic organization, with five offices across the Southeast and initiatives at federal, state and local levels. SACE continues to expand organizationally, to address the needs of a rapidly changing planet.**

- **As we look towards the future, SACE's commitment to preserve, restore and protect our environment through the use of innovative technology, community outreach, grassroots and grasstops education, and pioneer policy work remains steadfast.**

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The December 22, 2008 Spill:

- Shortly before 1:00 am, an earthen wall holding a 40-acres surface impoundment fails at TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant in Harriman, TN.
  - Over 1.1 billion gallons of coal ash is released into the surrounding area and the Emory River.
  - The spill covers over 300 acres of land in toxic sludge.
  - 42 properties are affected

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Health Effects of Pollutants Contained in Coal Ash:

- Arsenic: cancer
- Beryllium: lung cancer, respiratory problems
- Cadmium: lung disease, kidney disease, cancer
- Lead: nervous system and developmental problems
- Mercury: cognitive and developmental problems
- Selenium, Thallium, Vanadium: birth defects

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TVA has not adequately addressed this catastrophe.

- TVA has continually downplayed the damage caused by the spill and the potential hazards to area residents and the environment.
- TVA has yet to release a detailed plan for clean-up and recovery of the affected area.
- TVA has yet to release a full characterization of the contents of the breached containment pond.

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Current cleanup efforts:

- TVA is spending about $1 million/day on cleanup efforts:
  - Removing coal ash
  - containment efforts
  - Testing air and water for contamination
- Investigations by TVA and Tennessee of other coal ash storage sites
- Possible future dredging of affected areas

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What we've learned since the spill:

- This is a nation-wide problem: over 1,300 similar sites with minimal regulation and oversight.
  - As air regulations tighten, this waste stream is increasing in both volume and toxicity
- Current storage and disposal procedures for coal ash create a threat of similar catastrophes or long-term groundwater contamination.
- Comprehensive federal regulation by the EPA is required to protect human health and the environment from the threats posed by coal ash.

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SACE is working to address these issues:

- We are calling on TVA to fully characterize the spill site and make that data publicly available.
- We are prepared to hold TVA accountable in federal court if necessary.
- We have called for comprehensive federal regulation of coal ash, including at a minimum:
    - The phasing out of surface impoundments as a storage and disposal method for coal ash.
    - Standards for storage and disposal of coal ash that include:
        - the use of dry landfills that are isolated from water sources
        - impermeable liners, leachate collection and groundwater monitoring systems.

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Looking Ahead:

- Potential for federal regulation of Coal ash
- TVA:
  - Future clean-up efforts
  - Effects on rates
    - Clean-up costs
    - Legal actions
  - Further safeguards

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