



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.

# Alabama's Toxic Tragedy:

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



Alabama is home to **43 coal ash impoundments containing at least 28 billion gallons of coal combustion waste.**

That's enough to cover **66,456 football fields one foot deep.**

- ✓ According to the Environmental Integrity Project, **Alabama's coal ash impoundments contain almost 15 million pounds of toxic heavy metals**, making them the most toxic in the country.
- ✓ 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, these impoundments threaten to local communities:
  - ✓ **Two are High Hazard and would cause loss of life** in the event of a dam failure.
  - ✓ **Five are Significant Hazard and would damage property and infrastructure.**
- ✓ Most of the **1.1 billion gallons of coal ash removed from the Kingston disaster were dumped in the Arrowhead Landfill in Perry County, AL.** Mismanagement of the ash there is endangering the health of nearby residents by polluting air and water.
- ✓ Many of **Alabama's rivers are threatened** by coal ash including the Tennessee, Black Warrior, Coosa and Mobile Rivers. These supply drinking water to Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Bessemer, Cullman, Oneonta, Jasper and many other cities and are vital to local economies.

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

According to the report "State of Failure" by Earthjustice:

- Much of Alabama'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 0%** of Alabama's coal ash dams in the last 5 years.
- **Alabama fails to protect the public** from coal ash by imposing basic safeguards at coal ash dumps.
- Alabama 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)