



# South Carolina's Toxic Tragedy:

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

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

### STATES CAN'T DO IT ALONE

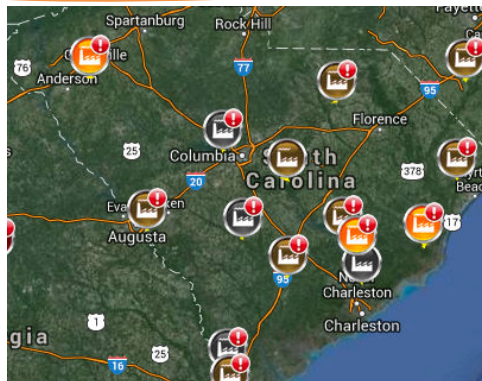
Coal ash is a nationwide problem at the intersection of energy, water, waste disposal, environmental justice, and public health. State programs fail to protect public health from toxic coal ash pollution. States need minimum federal standards to adequately address this problem.

### 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.**



South Carolina is home to **50 coal ash impoundments containing at least 4.9 billion gallons of coal combustion waste.** That's enough to cover **11,471 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.
- ✓ Because South Carolina utilities have failed to provide information to the Environmental Protection Agency, **four of South Carolina's twelve power plants have no hazard or condition ratings for their coal ash impoundments.**
- ✓ **Of those that have been rated by the EPA, ash impoundments at three S.C. power plants threaten local communities.**
  - ✓ **These are rated Significant Hazard and would damage** property and infrastructure in the event of a dam failure.
- ✓ **\$17 million worth of damage** has been caused to fish, wildlife and human communities by South Carolina's one documented coal ash damage case at Beaver Dam Creek. Many more instances of contamination have not yet been declared damage cases.

### South Carolina's Communities and Waters Need Coal Ash Protection

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

- Much of S.C.'s coal ash is dumped into unlined ponds or pits, located close to waterways. **Toxins readily leach into drinking water supplies.**
- Citizens across South Carolina are endangered by coal ash pollution:
  - Citizen and environmental groups have initiated lawsuits to stop pollution from power plants in Conway and Columbia.
  - Coal ash is the primary reason why South Carolina's Wateree River is named America's fifth-most endangered river of 2013 by American Rivers.
- **South Carolina fails to protect the public** from coal ash by imposing basic safeguards at coal ash dumps.
- S.C. regulations **lack requirements** for groundwater monitoring, liners for impoundments, financial assurance, emergency action plans and inundation mapping, meeting design standard and specifications and engineering inspections by operators.
- As of August 2011 **regulators had inspected 0%** of South Carolina's coal ash dams in the last 5 years.

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