

From: timmary747@aol.com
To: [Brown, Don](#)
Subject: [External] Written Public Comment on Proposed Coal Ash Rules
Date: Monday, October 26, 2020 5:03:19 PM

Oct. 25, 2020

Mr. Brown,

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Lake County, I'm writing today to advocate for strong regulations regarding coal ash. It is polluting our air, water, and harming our health. Coal ash contains toxic metals including arsenic, boron, chromium, lithium, and sulfate, and more. The toxics in coal ash can cause cancer, heart disease, lung and kidney disease, and birth defects. Illinois is one of the worst states for pollution from coal ash.

Because of the federal government's withdrawal from environmental protection, strict measures are called for at the state level. Robust and enforceable rules for the Coal Ash Pollution Prevention Act must require the safe disposal or storage of coal ash, actively involve the public, and promote a healthful environment.

In Waukegan, Lake County, Illinois sited next to Lake Michigan is NRG's subsidiary Midwest Generation coal burning power plant. For decades coal ash has been stored in impoundments (ponds) or historical coal ash storage areas. The toxic coal ash is contaminating the groundwater and the drinking water locally and for millions of residents in Illinois and surrounding states. We need to stop future contamination and cleanup the pollution already in our water caused by these active and inactive coal ash dumps.

In order to protect the groundwater's chemical integrity, rules for cleanup and closure of coal ash sites must provide permanent protection from coal ash pollution. When coal ash gets wet, heavy metals drain into the groundwater. Even ponds with high-quality liners have leaked due to cracks or tears. Rain on coal fill leach metals into the groundwater. Cleanup cannot be considered complete as long as the coal ash can get wet. This applies to not only the impoundments but also to coal ash landfills, dumps, and scattered fill.

As Waukegan is considered an environmental justice community, it should receive priority in closure of impoundments. To facilitate the decision-making process, the League believes that public understanding and participation are essential. The public has the right to know about pollution levels, dangers to health and environment, and proposed policies and options. Accordingly, the rules should include expanded outreach and require that opportunities, materials, and documents be made available to non-English speaking stakeholders. Additionally, hearings should be held in easily accessible locations, at convenient times, and, when possible, in the area concerned.

The League of Women Voters of Lake County supports inspections and monitoring and is pleased with the proposed rules regarding the frequency of monitoring and its continuation until groundwater meets the protection standards.

Thank you.

Mary Mathews, Director
League of Women Voters of Lake County