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To: [Brown, Don](#)
Cc: Fpettis@cleanpowerlakecounty.org
Subject: [External] Public Comment: AS 2021-03: Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station
Date: Monday, March 11, 2024 11:31:55 PM

Hello Illinois Pollution Control Board Members,

My name is Adriana Gonzalez, I am 27 years old. I was raised in Waukegan three miles from the coal plant and I have recently become a homeowner, not far from the plant either. I spoke originally at the scheduled hearing on February 7th and I am emailing to reiterate my support of our elders, leaders from Clean Power Lake County, and other local organizations and community members, all whom continue to advocate for our a safe, accessible, and clean lakefront. Visiting the harbor with family and playing sports on the beach with friends have been some of the sweetest memories I have made in Waukegan. However, mentally pushing aside the fact that our water is unsafe and at risk of further pollution is something I can no longer do when I understand the health risks more deeply.

I want to lead into this conversation first by emphasizing that I took time from work to be at the originally scheduled hearing. Many other people, especially concerned parents in the city, do not have the luxury to claim one or two benefit days to speak before the Board for a cause as important as this. While many more people would have attended, they were likely unable to. Unfortunately, others have yet to learn about the state of our lake as well.

Secondly, I want to share that I am a member of the Waukegan District 60 School Board although I act in my individual capacity and opinion here. I care about young leaders and I care about securing a sustainable future for myself and people younger than myself. The mission to help young people succeed is inextricably linked to our environment and how we treat it. Many of our families go out onto the lake in the summer and many kids struggle with health concerns like asthma which impacts how they learn and how they connect with the people around them. Our families become physically vulnerable and financially vulnerable, as medical assistance is costly.

I understand that NRG is requesting to waive responsibility to clean up ALL the coal that they have contributed to on our lakefront. I urge you all to say NO to their exemptions. Waukegan wants ALL of the coal ash removed from our lakefront. Our residents deserve to enjoy our fresh water resource without fear that our groundwater becomes yet another example of environmental catastrophe.

In principle, I believe that if you own something, you have a responsibility to care for it. I also believe that if you do something, you should do it well. The company must abide by the rules and regulations as there is no denying that the site threatens public health. NRG's argument against the law is null. Picking and choosing definitions of an "ash pond" to execute the bare legal minimum is not good enough for our community. Disregarding the most dangerous pond is counterintuitive to the entire clean up. If the crew will be out working either way to fulfill requirements, they should be tasked to clean it all.

As others have mentioned, Waukegan residents face disproportionate environmental harm than some of our neighbors. We are a working class community that understands that our lake is a gem of a resource and Waukegan is the heart of Lake County. NRG must respect the people of Waukegan by adhering to the coal ash laws, and remove all ash waste on their

property.