



Office of the Mayor

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Office: (847) 599-2510

March 29, 2024

To: Don Brown

Subject: Public Comment: AS 2021-03: Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station

The City of Waukegan is home to just under 90,000 people but we service 125 to 127 thousand residents every day, and I am writing today to speak on their behalf. I want to thank you for allowing me to issue a brief statement, and I want to thank the dedicated members of this Board for all the work that they do to restore, protect, and enhance the quality of Illinois environment.

The coal plant operated by Midwest Generation in Waukegan had adverse effects on the City's residents while it was still operating, and these impacts persist even after it ceased coal-fired operations. Unlike many other areas, Waukegan's coal plant is near Lake Michigan, right next to the Waukegan municipal beach and the City's water treatment plant. Moreover, our residents, both young and old, experience higher rates of asthma, and other respiratory issues. Midwest Generation has not cooperated effectively with the City and despite the City's repeated requests, Midwest Generation has refused to clean up all the toxic coal ash from the coal ponds within the city limits and other surface coal ash areas.

This has happened even as Midwest Generation's own hazard assessment states, A hypothetical failure of their coal ash ponds, quote, "has the potential to flow directly into Lake Michigan and cause off-site environmental effects," end quote. Despite extensive public input, strongly advocating for the complete removal of all coal ash from the site during the public closure hearings, Midwest Generation has maintained its initial decision to leave unlined coal ash at this location. The company aims to do the bare minimum rather than prioritizing what's right or best for the residents of Waukegan.

The scientists and experts contracted by NRG have documented alarmingly high concentrations of toxic metals in the groundwater surrounding the Waukegan plant. Groundwater analysis conducted at the site reveal staggering levels of contamination. Arsenic passes safe thresholds in the monitoring wells by over 2,000 times. Boron levels exceed Illinois drinking water standards by more than 16 times, and chromium passes safe levels by more than 480 times. Additionally, lithium alum and sulfate also register levels far beyond safe limits. These toxic metals are linked to cancer, neurological impairment, and congenital disabilities and can inflict damage on the liver, kidneys, stomach, and reproductive systems.

Waukegan is already burdened with five EPA Superfund sites. The residents of Waukegan cannot bear the financial cost of yet another environmental catastrophe caused by a private company. This company has reported a net income of \$1.2 billion last year and is failing to address its environmental



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mess adequately. I urge every member of the Board to consider—Would you tolerate a company inflicting this alarm on your family and your neighbors?

Waukeganites deserve better. They deserve to be listened to. They deserve clean air and safe water, and they deserve not to have to worry about what happens to unaddressed coal ash and how it will impact their children and grandchildren in the years to come. I want to mention that Waukegan is a low to moderate income community, with hard working residents. Remember during COVID, these were the people who we were crying for that we didn't have people to do our service industries anymore, or to run our small businesses. And yet they are the backbone of our economy and the people we are turning our backs on today.

So I ask you to please consider the residents of Waukegan and the impact that it will have on this community. And I want you to know I am going to fight tooth and nail for these residents because I believe in this community, and I believe in our people.

Thank you,

Mayor Ann B. Taylor

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From: [Thomas Maillard](#)
To: [Brown, Don](#)
Cc: "fpettis@cleanpowerlakecounty.org"
Subject: [External] Public Comment: AS 2021-03: Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station
Date: Friday, March 29, 2024 4:19:10 PM
Attachments: [Waukegan Mayor Taylor Public Comment AS 2021-03 Adjusted Standard for the Waukegan Station.pdf](#)

Good afternoon,

Please submit the attached public comment by Waukegan Mayor Ann Taylor into record. I have also included Mayor Taylor's comments below.

Sincere regards,

Thomas Maillard (He/Him)

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Waukegan is already burdened with five EPA Superfund sites. The residents of Waukegan cannot bear the financial cost of yet another environmental catastrophe caused by a private company. This company has reported a net income of \$1.2 billion last year and is failing to address its environmental mess adequately. I urge every member of the Board to consider—Would you tolerate a company inflicting this alarm on your family and your neighbors?

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