

From: [Patty W](#)
To: [Brown, Don](#); [Patty W](#)
Subject: [External] Citizen comment on The Coal Ash Pollution Prevention Act
Date: Friday, August 21, 2020 7:03:43 PM

Dear Mr. Brown—

The problems that coal ash causes to Illinois' environment are serious and frightening, and I submit that **The Coal Ash Pollution Prevention Act** regulations set the highest possible standards to insure clean water. Water is not only essential to life, riparian areas are also prime habitats, and almost all coal ash ponds are next to rivers and ponds. I request that the regulations currently being reviewed be stronger than the minimal levels of compliance to regulate toxic wastes and metals. As with intelligent responses to the Covid-19 epidemic, we must use all precautions and be vigilant in assuring the health of people, animals, and the environment. It is much more efficient to prevent wastes from being released than to incur the expense of cleaning wastes from our water and soil. Ultimately as a society we need to phase out coal plants with their multitude manifestations of pollution.

Some specific facts that concern me are:

- Illinois EPA identified 73 coal ash ponds at dozens of power plant sites across the state, nearly all of which are next to rivers and lakes. Groundwater at 22 of 24 coal ash sites tested in Illinois, including impoundments and landfills, had unsafe concentrations of toxic coal ash pollutants.
- Safe closure of coal ash impoundments is critically important to protecting human health, drinking water, and the environment.
- Where coal ash has already contaminated the land and water, clean-up of the contamination is a major issue facing Illinois. We need to stop further contamination AND cleanup the pollution already in our water (Prairie Rivers Network July 2020).
- The Vermillion Power Station, which is next to Illinois' only National Wild and Scenic River, the Middle Fork of the Vermillion River, where river otters swim and is home to twenty-four state threatened and endangered species, has three ash pits that are in the floodplain (McKassen Shawnee Trails newsletter Fall 2020).

Thank you very much for your time and the opportunity to give input on this important issue.

Sincerely, Patty Weyhrich

Carbondale, IL