



# Mississippi'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

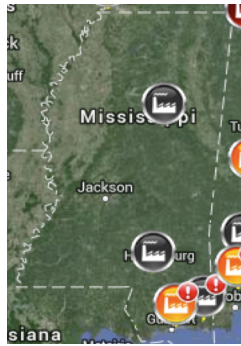
Coal ash is a nation wide problem at the intersection of energy, water, waste disposal, environmental justice, and public health. State programs fail to protect public health from toxic coal ash pollution. States need minimum federal standards to adequately address this problem.

## 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 Representatives 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.



Due to a lack of utility reporting, Mississippi's public is left in the dark about coal ash dumps scattered throughout the state and the dangers they pose to nearby communities, waterways and infrastructure.

- ✓ Mississippi's 4 active coal-fired power plants produce approximately **1.75 million tons of toxic coal ash each year**. The state ranks 24<sup>th</sup> in the nation for coal ash generation.
- ✓ After the 2008 coal ash disaster in Kingston, TN, the Environmental Protection Agency set out to rate all coal ash impoundments nation wide based on the threat they pose to nearby communities and infrastructure.
- ✓ **Because Mississippi utilities fail to provide adequate information to the Environmental Protection Agency, the public has no way to know:**
  - ✓ The total amount of toxic coal ash stored at each power plant
  - ✓ The hazard posed by coal ash dams to local communities and waterways
  - ✓ The condition and stability of ash impoundment dams

## Mississippi's Communities and Waters Need Coal Ash Protection

According to the reports "State of Failure" by Earthjustice and "Closing the Floodgates" by the Environmental Integrity Project:

There are **no limits on the amount of toxic heavy metals** Mississippi power plants are allowed to discharge to public waters, seriously endangering nearby waterways for local communities and wildlife.

- Plant Jack Watson is the only power plant in Mississippi with an EPA hazard rating, it poses a 'significant' threat to nearby communities. The majority of coal ash there is dumped in an unlined lagoon on the banks of the Biloxi River **where coal ash toxins can readily leach into surface waters.**
- **All four** of Mississippi's coal-fired power plants are located next to large bodies of water that are used for fishing and recreation.
- **Mississippi fails to protect the public** from coal ash by imposing basic safeguards at coal ash dumps.
- Mississippi **regulations lack requirements** for groundwater monitoring, liners for impoundments, financial assurance, prohibition of coal ash impoundments in the water table and engineering inspections by operators.

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



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