

ASH POND NEWSLETTER



December 2018

The following is a collection of ash pond news from the first three weeks of December. The intent of the newsletter is to summarize news regarding ash pond closure activities, lawsuits filed against utilities relating to their ash ponds, as well as regulatory changes impacting ash pond operations or closures. This newsletter is distributed on a monthly basis.

THE SPILL THAT STARTED IT ALL

Some of you who were involved may remember, but it is amazing to think that it has already been ten years since the devastating coal ash spill at **Tennessee Valley Authority's** Kingston Fossil Fuel Power Plant on December 22, 2008. It is important to remember how catastrophic an ash pond failure could be and to reflect on the lessons learned from this event.

On this ten-year anniversary, instead of tin or aluminum, we share the gift of coal ash.



A Home near the Kingston Plant after the Spill

<https://www.knoxnews.com/story/news/crime/2018/12/20/tennessee-coal-ash-spill-2008-kingston-tva-workers-dying/2333814002/>

COAL POWER PLANT ASH POND CLOSURES AND MODIFICATIONS

Alabama – All of Alabama's active coal ash ponds are located less than five feet above groundwater aquifers and will have to close permanently in order to comply with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2015 coal ash rules.

<https://www.al.com/news/2018/12/epa-alabama-coal-ash-ponds-do-not-meet-groundwater-rules-must-permanently-close.html>

Georgia – **Georgia Power** to begin ash pond closures at decommissioned Plant Branch facility. The goal at Plant Branch is to completely excavate the ash ponds, then store the ash in a new, lined landfill. The power station closed in March 2015. Since then, the power plant and supporting facilities have been dismantled. The company will begin the dewatering process in January 2019.

<https://dailyenergyinsider.com/news/16583-georgia-power-to-begin-ash-pond-closures-at-decommissioned-plant-branch-facility/>

Tennessee – The **Tennessee Valley Authority** is asking for public input by January 4, 2019, on options for closure of its coal ash storage areas at the former Allen Fossil Plant. The plant's three coal-fired units were retired on March 31, 2018.

<https://eponline.com/articles/2018/12/03/tva-wants-comments-on-coal-ash.aspx>

Virginia – **Dominion Energy** is looking to raise approximately \$302 million to cover upgrade costs to three of their power plants: Chesterfield, Clover, and Mount Storm. Some of that money would be used for projects such as the construction of a new landfill, and transition power plants away from transporting and storing coal ash with water.

https://www.richmond.com/news/local/dominion-files-to-recover-million-from-ratepayers-for-environmental-upgrades/article_db1648ec-f792-5ef3-baeb-a4e740697e40.html

Virginia – **Dominion Energy** briefed lawmakers on a November report that estimates that it could cost \$2.4 billion to \$5.7 billion to excavate 27 million cubic yards of coal ash stored underground across the state of Virginia and recycle just under half of it. This could end up costing the average household an additional \$3.30 per month over 20 years.

https://www.roanoke.com/news/virginia/coal-ash-excavation-could-cost-dominion-ratepayers-an-extra-per/article_f031a4b3-3c8d-578d-a8e8-b859589609bc.html

LEGAL AND REGULATORY

North Carolina – **Duke Energy** has asked state environmental regulators for a deadline extension to excavate and close its impoundments at the Sutton plant in Wilmington, North Carolina. If the extension is granted, the new date for closure would be February 2020, six months beyond the original deadline of August 2019.

<http://pulse.ncpolicywatch.org/2018/12/17/duke-energy-asks-deq-for-six-month-extension-to-close-coal-impoundments-at-sutton/>

CONTAMINATION

67 coal-fired power plants in 22 different states are reporting groundwater contamination at their coal ash impoundments, exceeding federal health standards.

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/as-67-coal-plants-in-22-states-report-coal-ash-violations-greens-fear-prol/544843/>

Georgia – The Environmental Integrity Project and Earthjustice determined that 11 out of 12 of Georgia's coal-fired power plants have contaminated groundwater with one or more toxic pollutants. Ten of these 11 polluting plants are owned by **Georgia Power**.

<https://earthjustice.org/features/coal-ash-contamination-georgia-groundwater>

<https://www.utilitydive.com/news/nearly-all-georgia-coal-plants-report-groundwater-pollution-near-ash-ponds/544293/>

Georgia – **Georgia Power** confirms coal ash ponds fail to meet federal siting restrictions, according to the utility's disclosures for 10 of its 29 coal ash ponds statewide. All 10 ponds fail to comply with the location restriction that requires at least a five-foot buffer between the bottom of a coal ash pond and the underlying groundwater aquifer. In some cases, the coal ash ponds appear to be sitting in groundwater.

<http://coosavalleynews.com/2018/12/georgia-power-confirms-coal-ash-ponds-fail-to-meet-federal-siting-restrictions/>

Virginia – A report commissioned by the James River Association and Southern Environmental Law Center, two Virginia-based environmental advocacy groups, claims there is elevated risk of cancer and other health impacts from exposure to coal ash contamination in Chesterfield's Dutch Gap Conservation Area, located near **Dominion Energy's** Chesterfield Power Station.

<https://www.chesterfieldobserver.com/articles/environmental-groups-report-coal-ash-elevates-health-risks-at-dutch-gap/>

From all of us at Roux, *Happy Holidays*

