

ASH POND NEWSLETTER



November 2020

The following is a collection of ash pond news from the month of November 2020. 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.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY

Proposed legislation requiring all coal ash in Georgia to be stored in lined landfills fell short in this year's General Assembly. The bill will be reintroduced this winter, thanks to support and lawsuits from small communities such as Juliette, Georgia. Residents of Juliette allege that an ash pond at **Georgia Power's** Plant Scherer is polluting their drinking water. While **Georgia Power's** plan calls for removing the ash from 19 ponds and closing the other 10 ponds in place, environmental groups are calling for the Atlanta-based utility to excavate all 29 ponds.



Plant Scherer in Juliette, GA

<https://www.albanyherald.com/news/>

A recent Trump Administration rule, which weakens Obama-era requirements on coal-fired power plants, is now facing a lawsuit by environmental groups, including the Sierra Club and Natural Resources Defense Council. The Trump Administration rule allows utilities to use cheaper pollution control technologies and gives them more time before they have to reduce their pollution levels. It affects 75 out of 914 plants nationwide.

<https://www.wpr.org/>

Alabama Power plans to close a coal ash waste storage pond at the Gadsden Steam Plant, located near Henry Neely Lake, which connects to the Coosa River. The coal ash waste there has been capped since 2018, but **Alabama Power** must obtain a permit to ensure the waste is stored safely under new EPA guidelines. The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) requires public input for the draft permit. No **Alabama Power** representatives attended the meeting. The ADEM will be taking public comments through November 29, 2020.

<https://www.cbs42.com/news/>

The US Court of Appeals of the Seventh Circuit heard virtual arguments regarding alleged contamination from a former Minooka, Illinois coal-fired power station, operated by **Dynegy Midwest Generation**.

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/> (SUBSCRIPTION REQUIRED)

CLOSURE AND MODIFICATIONS

American Electric Power (AEP) is bringing three power plants in West Virginia into compliance with current federal regulations. AEP plans to install dry bottom ash handling systems or new lined ash ponds at the John E. Amos Plant near Winfield, the Mountaineer Power plant near New Haven, and the Mitchell Power Plant near Moundsville. Plans have been submitted for approval by the USEPA.

<https://www.wvgazettemail.com/business/>



John E Amos Power Plant in Winfield, WV

underway with disposing of this coal ash into lined landfills on the property and permanently closing the coal ash basin. Over 77% of the coal ash has been recycled, with the remaining staged and ready to go into the landfills as soon as they are built, likely in 2022.

<https://www.thestokesnews.com/news/>

We Energies will retire the oldest part of its coal-fired power plant complex in Oak Creek, Wisconsin in 2023 and 2024. The site occupies 1,000 acres on the western shore of Lake Michigan. Its parent company, WEC Energy Corp of Milwaukee, is shifting to more efficient power generation, and decommissioning some of its less efficient coal-fired plants in the process.

<https://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/news/>

AEP is also planning to retire one coal-fired power plant in Texas and discontinue using coal in another plant in Texas as it continues to move towards electric generation. The 580-megawatt Pirkey Plant in Hallsville, Texas is scheduled to be retired in 2023. The other Texas plant facing energy changes is the 1,053-megawatt Pittsburg Plant, a change scheduled to take place in 2028.

<https://www.dispatch.com/story/>

In the next decade, nine coal plants in Indiana are expected to close or partially shut down. The transition away from coal may have economic repercussions, despite the promise of cleaner air. One example is in the town of Petersburg, Indiana, where **Indianapolis Power & Light** is the county's largest taxpayer, and nearly half of that goes to the school district. Petersburg and other towns in Indiana are hoping to bring in new industries to keep businesses and the community alive.

<https://indianapublicmedia.org/news/>

The **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)** is considering moving 3.5 million cubic yards of coal ash from a retired plant in Memphis, Tennessee to one of two off-site landfills. A **TVA** report said it has narrowed down the primary destination for coal ash removed from the retired Allen Fossil Plant to either a landfill in Shelby County, Tennessee—not far from the location of the Allen plant—or a landfill in Tunica, Mississippi, about 30 miles south of Memphis. The project is expected to take eight years. Allen’s three coal-fired units were retired in 2018.

<https://apnews.com/article/>



Allen Fossil Plant in Memphis, TN

In April of this year, Hilco Redevelopment Partners used explosives to implode a nearly 400-foot smokestack in the Little Village community of Chicago. The botched demolition blanketed the community in a thick plume of dirt and dust, also prompting multiple air pollution violations. Hilco’s plan to demolish the remainder of the former **Crawford Power Generation Station** site will continue, proceeding with redevelopment into a warehouse and distribution hub for Target. However, Hilco and two of their contractors will pay a \$370,000 settlement which is intended provide funding to improve health outcomes in the community they affected.

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/>

In the town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a former coal ash site, now the site of the Chapel Hill Police Station, was once the dumping ground for 60,000 cubic yards of coal ash. Although this site was active in the 1960s and 1970s, the pollution was not discovered until 2013. Since that time, ecological and environmental studies have been completed to determine the total scope of contamination. Both water and sediment samples from nearby Bolin Creek show elevated levels of coal ash contaminants. The town is still considering options for the remediation and timeline of remediation at this site.

<https://www.dailytarheel.com/article/>

For the last ten years, The Georgia Water Coalition has issued an annual list of threats to waterways across the state, called the “Dirty Dozen” report. The list includes polluted places, as well as issues that threaten Georgia’s water. Many items on the list are ongoing and have appeared on the list for many years. New to the list this year are sewage overflows from the city of Columbus, a landfill proposal in Brantley County with the potential to pollute a nearby river, and other landfill failures in Forsyth and Cherokee counties.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/> (SUBSCRIPTION REQUIRED)

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