

# ASH POND NEWSBYTES



July 2021

Dear Readers,

The following is a collection of ash pond news from the month of July 2021. Our intent is to provide you with important news pieces to help inform your business decisions and keep you up to date about the coal and ash pond industry.

– Peter Alvey & The Roux Team



Riverbank discoloration near the Green Power Station coal ash landfill

## CONTAMINATION

A private company in Puerto Rico, **Luma**, operates a coal-powered electricity plant in Guayama originally opened by **AES Corporation**. When the plant opened in 2002, the operators made promises that the ash waste product could be mixed into materials for construction projects. However, the ash that the plant produces far outweighs the demand for commercial construction projects and AES has disposed of the ash waste product in landfills across the US, Dominican Republic, and in a pile near the plant. Due to the ground, water, and air contamination, there is allegedly an extremely high prevalence of cancer and respiratory diseases found in the nearby residents of the Puerto Rican town. [Link](#)

## DID YOU KNOW?

According to the American Coal Ash Association's Coal Combustion Product Production & Use Survey Report, nearly 130 million tons of coal ash was generated in 2014. This makes coal ash one of the largest types of industrial waste generated in the United States.

Check out the USEPA's fact sheet on coal ash for more information: <https://www.epa.gov/coalash/coal-ash-basics>

## CONTAMINATION, CONT.

Advocacy groups and residents of Northwest Indiana are fighting to have the Michigan City Coal Plant, owned by **NIPSCO**, completely remove all coal ash on-site. Currently, NIPSCO is proposing to remove the coal ash from the five ponds on-site but leave in place much older coal ash that formed a makeshift landfill along Lake Michigan, upheld by aging steel seawalls. Groundwater near the Michigan City plant is highly contaminated, and there is a fear that coal ash leaking into the groundwater will make its way into lake sediment and bioaccumulate into lake organisms. [Link](#)

## COAL POWER PLANT ASH POND CLOSURE AND MODIFICATIONS

The William H. Zimmer Power Station, owned by **Vistra Corp** in Moscow, Ohio, will close in May 2022. This is five years ahead of schedule, due to lower profits than expected. Vistra Corp is evaluating the site for potential investments in renewables or grid-scale battery storage, with an emphasis on utilizing existing infrastructure. [Link](#)

**Big Rivers Electric Corporation** will close its Robert D. Green generating station in June of 2022 after operating for four decades near the town of Sebree, Kentucky. The decommissioning is in line with USEPA environmental regulation compliance that requires a conversion to burn natural gas—improving air quality and limiting the amount of coal ash production. State inspectors have documented unsafe levels of carcinogenic and neurotoxic heavy metals seeping out of the banks of the nearby Green River since 2017. Big Rivers has also noted unsafe levels of ash pollution in groundwater nearby. [Link](#)

The Cheswick Generating Station in Springdale, Pennsylvania is the county's last coal-fired power plant, and is scheduled to permanently close this September, which locals fear will have a ripple effect on the local economy. The plant currently employs 50 people and is operated by **GenOn Holdings**, which is also closing their Avon Lake, Ohio plant and their Newburg, Maryland plant in the near future. [Link](#)

## CLOSURES, CONT.

The **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)** is looking to close three of its five remaining coal-fired plants: Kingston Plant near Kingston, Tennessee; Bull Run near Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and the Cumberland Fossil Plant in Cumberland City, Tennessee. Together, these produce around 3,900 megawatts of electricity.

Despite President Biden's wishes to decarbonize the energy sector, TVA plans to replace the power generation from coal with natural gas plants; this plan will need to be approved by the TVA board. TVA does plan to add over 10,000 megawatts of solar power to its system by 2035, but that will not serve as a replacement for the current coal plants. TVA has an aspirational goal of net zero emissions by 2050. [Link](#)

## CLOSURES, CONT.

In Logansport, Indiana, **Logansport Municipal Utilities** has plans to demolish both a water treatment plant and the Logansport Generating coal-fired power plant in March 2022. The plant ceased operations in 2016 after it was deemed too inefficient and costly to run. The cost for demolition of both plants is estimated at \$1.6 million and the city will apply for a large grant from the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs. [Link](#)

In Avon Lake, Ohio, **Charah Solutions Inc.** has purchased the Avon Lake Power plant from **GenOn**. Charah Solutions Inc. will begin the demolition of the coal-fired plant in April 2022 when the plant ceases operation. Charah plans to redevelop the 40-acre site along Lake Erie, with oversight by the **Avon Lake Environmental Redevelopment Group**. [Link](#)



*Michigan City, Indiana power plant to close by 2028*

## LEGAL AND REGULATORY

The **United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)** has approved a request for permit authority under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act ([RCRA] 40 C.F.R. § 257) by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). This permit approval allows the TCEQ to implement federal standards regarding ash disposal, groundwater monitoring, technical and siting requirements, and closure procedures. [Link](#)

The **USEPA** has announced a new rule-making process to strengthen wastewater discharge limits for coal-powered plants that generate electricity using steam. This rule will take advantage of opportunities to advance the treatment of industrial pollution. In the meantime, the 2015 and 2020 Steam Electric Effluent Limitations Guideline (ELG) rules will be implemented and enforced. These rules allow for better control of water pollution from power plants while reducing the cost of other controls, such as biological treatment and membrane treatment systems. [Link](#)

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) issued a Coal Combustion Residual closure permit for **Alabama Power's** Barry Plant ash pond. The closure of the pond will follow USEPA regulations for seal-in-place closure. Alabama Power plans to follow the USEPA regulations and remove all water from the pond, create a buffer between remaining contents of the pond and the Mobile River, and install a specially engineered barrier over the pond. [Link](#)

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Muscatine Power and Water (MPW)** in Muscatine, Iowa is beginning to embark on their several-year initiative called "Power the Future," that will allow the non-profit MPW to transition from their coal-fired power plant to a natural gas-powered unit. The Power the Future initiative will include doubling MPW's renewably generated energy, reducing CO<sup>2</sup> emissions by 25% in 2024 and 65% in 2030, retiring three coal-fired units by 2024, building a natural gas-fired heat and power generating unit by 2028, and growing their renewable energy program. By phasing out coal, turning to natural gas, and building renewable infrastructure, MPW hopes to achieve a 65% CO<sup>2</sup> emission reduction over the next 10 years. [Link](#)



*Plant Barry, Alabama Power*

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