

ASH POND NEWSBYTES



September 2021

Dear Readers,

The following is a collection of ash pond news from the month of September 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

LEGAL AND REGULATORY

Residents and former residents of Colstrip, Montana are suing the Colstrip Power Plant for alleged coal dust damage. The power plant is owned by [Avista](#) of Spokane, Washington, [NorthWestern Energy](#), Oregon utilities [PacifiCorp](#) and [Portland General Electric](#), and [Puget Sound Energy](#) of Western Washington. The plant has operated since the 1970s and residents have been raising various complaints since 2018. [Link](#)

A new law in Illinois, the “Climate and Equitable Jobs Act,” seeks to aid workers and communities affected by the move to cleaner energy. The legislation was signed this month by Governor J.B. Pritzker. The law will close all fossil fuel plants by 2045, although most of the coal plants in Illinois were already scheduled to be closed within a decade. It will also call on power companies to pay for transition projects, including equity and job training. [Link](#)



Richmond Power and Light in Wayne County, Indiana (story on p. 2)

SPECIAL REPORT

[Marsh](#), a large insurance broker, released a report for [Enbridge](#) which stated that carbon emission concerns and low profitability of insurers hit by pollution-related losses are starting to support insurers’ overall aversion to oil projects. Although oil companies may have a tougher time finding insurance companies in the future, Enbridge has stated that it maintains an appropriate amount of insurance for its operations and is capable of adjusting to evolving market conditions. Enbridge has had recent spills in Minnesota in 2002, and Michigan in 2010. The spill in Michigan cost Enbridge \$1.2B in cleanup costs. [Link](#)

BENEFICIAL REUSE

In recent months, ash pond news has become increasingly more about the decommissioning and retiring of coal-fired power plants. This often involves costs for environmental remediation requirements, demolition, and redevelopment. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) makes the case for repurposing coal plants rather than decommissioning them. The possibilities for solar and battery storage at these plants have net benefits which not only outweigh the straight capital costs of decommissioning, but also present a unique opportunity for power systems in developing nations in their transition from coal to renewable energy. [Link](#)

CLOSURES & MODIFICATIONS

In Grand Haven, Michigan, community opposition shut down plans for a \$27 million, 12.5-megawatt power plant proposed by the **Board of Light and Power**, which is a community-owned utility. The plant was meant to serve as a backup peaking plant which would save city residents \$5 million in electric costs over 20 years. The Board of Light and Power is simultaneously dealing with the monitoring of PFAS chemicals on Harbor Island, Michigan, which has made development of a power plant more difficult. Although the construction of the plant won't move forward, the permit has been approved and is applicable for 18 months should the city change course. [Link](#)

SPECIAL REPORT

In New South Wales, a 2019 report released by **Origin Energy** noted the possibility of an earthquake near its Eraring Power Station at Lake Macquarie. The risk of the massive ash dam failing in the event of an earthquake was noted as extremely high. Nearby, the Myuna Bay Centre on Whiteheads Lagoon Access to the nearby Myuna Bay Centre on Whiteheads Lagoon has been blocked since 2019 and the Myuna Bay Water Ski Club is demanding reentry. [Link](#)

CONTAMINATION

The former Walter C. Beckford Generating Station in Richmond, Ohio is located 22 miles east of Cincinnati on the Ohio River. In February 2021, the plant smokestack was demolished, and part of the debris fell into the Ohio River. Cleanup began this month under order of the US Army Corps of Engineers. The plant is owned by **Duke Energy, American Electric Power, and Dayton Power & Light**. It was decommissioned in 2014. [Link](#)

The Dallman Power Station in Springfield, Illinois, had an ash release earlier this month. The power station is owned by **City Water, Light, and Power**. An investigation found that the incident was caused by workers who were removing a valve in the silo in an attempt to clear blockage caused by a filter bag that got caught in the silo. It is likely that dry fly ash was released for over an hour before the release was contained. [Link](#)

Richmond Power and Light of Indiana must comply with 2015 EPA regulations for the safe disposal of coal combustion residuals due to its proximity to groundwater. The company has unveiled a \$26 million plan to dispose of the coal ash at its production facility in Wayne County, Indiana. Its plan does not include beneficial reuse because the ash has been sitting out in the elements for 30 years. [Link](#)

IN OTHER NEWS

A methane blowout from a failing natural gas storage well in San Fernando Valley, California in 2015 is considered the largest methane leak in U.S. history. After six years of lawsuits, **Southern California Gas Co**, which operates the storage facility, and its parent company **Sempra Energy**, agreed to \$1.8B in settlements. Settlement costs will not be passed on to customers. In 2015, there were 112 days in which approximately 100,000 tons of methane, ethane, and other chemicals caused 8,000 families to evacuate their homes. Governor Gavin Newsom is seeking the permanent shutdown of the Aliso Canyon facility where the blowout occurred. [Link](#)

The **Siltech Corporation** silicon manufacturing plant in East York, Toronto experienced an explosion on September 8th, leaving one person dead and another with severe injuries. Toronto police confirmed that the fire was caused by a chemical spill and further investigation is ongoing. [Link](#)

In August 2014, 29 million gallons of wastewater from a fracking operation spilled from a pipeline near Williston, North Dakota, contaminating groundwater and 30 miles of Missouri River tributaries. This month, the pipeline operator **Summit Midstream Partners** pleaded guilty in federal court to criminal water pollution charges and agreed to pay \$36.3M to settle. The spill lasted for five months before it was contained and had concentrations of saline, oil, radioactive substances, ammonia, aluminum,

The Walter C. Beckford Station, a closed Duke Energy power plant located 20 miles east of Cincinnati, contains more than 10 billion pounds of toxins that are packed into ponds along the banks of the Ohio River.



IN OTHER NEWS, CONT.

Federal and state agencies are responding to oil and chemical spills following the category 4 Hurricane Ida and its landfall with 150 mph wind speeds and associated storm surges. With a variety of oil refineries in Louisiana and Texas, state regulators are in the assessment phase to determine the sources and contents of spills. Louisiana regulators are tracking around 100 reports of spills, such as sunken boats leaking diesel, overturned fuel tanks and flooded oil pipelines, or toxic chemical venting. In Belle Chasse, Louisiana, the [Philips 66 Alliance Refinery](#) was noted to have flood water with a rainbow sheen and black streaks of an unknown origin.

The widespread flooding from Ida caused environmental concerns with various chemical manufacturing facilities. A [CF Industries](#) fertilizer facility experienced a release, with no off-site impact, of anhydrous ammonia from two storage tanks. [Koch Industries](#) reported a release of the toxic gas nitrogen at a site near Mississippi. In addition, hundreds of thousands of gallons of raw sewage wastewater were released as a result of a power failure in New Orleans' Jefferson Parish sewer system. Ida also caused wide-spread flooding to the American Cyanamid Superfund site in Bridgewater Township, New Jersey. The Superfund site is contaminated with volatile organic compounds, metals, and chemicals, and is located along the Raritan River above New Jersey's second largest drinking water source, the Brunswick Aquifer. [Link 1](#) [Link 2](#)

IN OTHER NEWS, CONT.

Easton, Massachusetts has filed a lawsuit alleging per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contamination in the town's groundwater from chemical manufacturers. The lawsuit alleges that aqueous film-forming foam products containing PFOS and PFOA were used by the Easton Fire and Rescue Department for firefighting. The Easton Fire and Rescue Department was unaware of the serious health effects of PFOA and PFOS chemicals during their usage, and the town alleges that such chemicals have contaminated the town's drinking water. Since 2019, Easton has been monitoring the groundwater for PFAS, and has recorded measurements up to 51.5 parts per trillion (ppt). Easton has developed plans for a \$9.2 million water treatment plant filtration system to remove the contaminants from the public water supply. [Link](#)

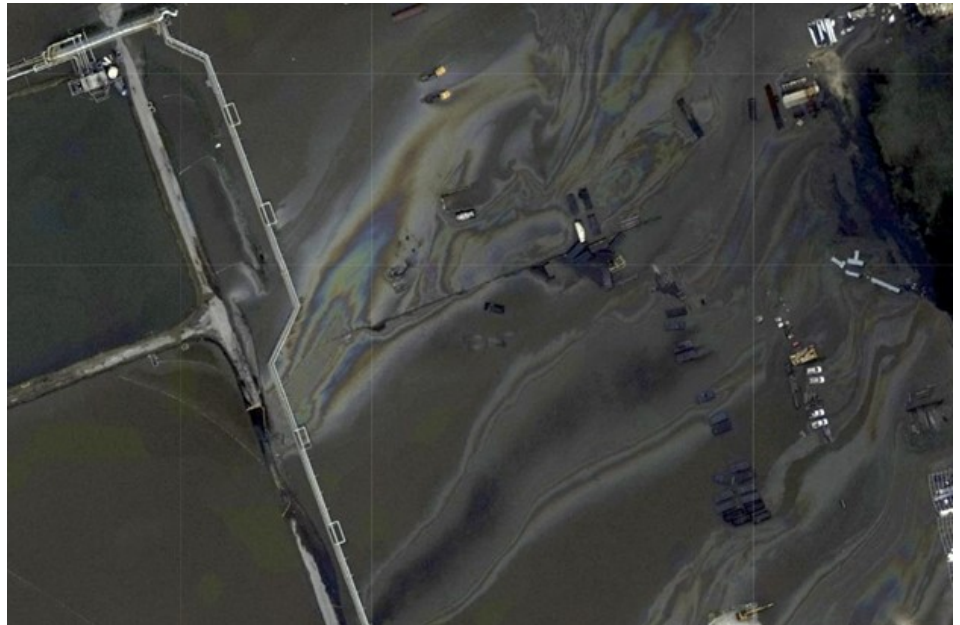
IN OTHER NEWS, CONT.

Fairfield, Maine property owners are suing paper mills in Waterville for their alleged contribution to PFAS exposure. The lawsuit is requesting resolution for financial damages and medical monitoring for six property owners who were exposed to PFAS. The property owners used leftover bio-solids from the papermaking process as agriculture fertilizers. Over time, the industrial compounds seeped into private groundwater wells and have contaminated the groundwater of the residents. [Link](#)

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Oil slick on the flood waters in Belle Chasse, Louisiana