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Environmental Integrity Project

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Report: 20 Additional Toxic Coal Ash Contamination Sites Found in 10 States

Source: [Environmental Integrity Project](#)

Dec. 13, 2011

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As Congress Considers 'Deregulating' Toxic Coal Ash, Citizens Plea for Federal Enforcement of Standards to Protect Their Drinking Water; EIP Report Details How Arsenic & Other Dangerous Pollutants Contaminated Groundwater and Soil at Newly Identified Sites in FL, GA, IL, IN, IA, KY, NV, SC, TN and TX.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13, 2011 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A total of 20 additional coal ash dump sites causing groundwater and soil contamination in 10 states – Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Nevada, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas – have been uncovered by the nonprofit Environmental Integrity Project (EIP).

Today, EIP also released a letter to Congress from thousands of residents near coal ash dump sites in 27 states pleading for proper federal oversight – even as some in Congress are urging that federal oversight to clean up toxic coal ash pollution be relaxed and authority to enforce meaningful standards be eliminated.

Since 2010, EIP has identified 90 coal ash ponds and landfills with groundwater contamination that have been overlooked in reports prepared by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Nearly all (19 of 20) of the newly identified problem coal ash dump sites have contaminated groundwater with arsenic or other toxic metals exceeding at least one Safe Drinking Water Act Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) as well as other health-based standards. An additional site in Indiana has contaminated soil along a rail trail with arsenic 900 times the federal screening levels for site cleanups.

By state, the 20 new sites identified in the report are:

- Illinois (7): Dallman Power Station, Joliet Station, Joppa Plant, Meredosia Power Station, Pearl Station, Powerton Station, and Waukegan Station;

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- South Carolina (3): Cross Station, McMeekin Station, and Winyah Station;
- Iowa (2): Fair Station and Prairie Creek Generating Station;
- Texas (2): Coletto Creek Station and W.A. Parish Station;
- Florida (1): Plant Crist;
- Georgia (1): Plant Yates;
- Indiana (1): soil at an urban rail trail in Bloomington;
- Kentucky (1): Paradise Fossil Plant;
- Nevada (1): North Valmy Station; and
- Tennessee: (1) Allen Fossil Plant.

Jeff Stant, director, Coal Combustion Waste Initiative, Environmental Integrity Project, said:

'The 67 cases of coal ash water contamination identified by the EPA and the additional body 90 toxic sites found by EIP all point to one clear conclusion: Those in Congress who think this threat to groundwater and drinking water should go unmonitored, unpoliced and unaddressed are dead wrong. We already have here a clear and present danger to America's public health; it is no solution for Congress to hand authority for addressing the problem permanently to states that have refused to enforce common-sense standards for the past 30 years and hope that the whole problem then somehow goes away.'

Frank Michna, a resident of Caledonia, WI who lives near coal ash [landfills](#) and other ash fill areas of the Oak Creek Power Plant, said: **'The state of Wisconsin has known our wells are contaminated with molybdenum that has been leaching at toxic levels for years from these sites but says it can't move any faster because it doesn't know where the sites are and can't make WE Energies identify their location.'**

Arsenic has been measured above the federal drinking water standard (MCL) of 10 parts per billion at 14 sites of the 20 new sites, with concentrations more than 10 times the standard at the Winyah (SC), Meredosia (IL), Parish (TX) and North Valmy (NV) sites.

Lead, [chromium](#) or selenium were exceeding standards by multiple times in groundwater at several sites including the McMeekin site (SC), Plant Yates (GA), Fair Station (IA), and Coletto and Parish Stations (TX).

All 19 sites with [water contamination](#) also had measured concentrations of toxic pollutants other than arsenic and other primary drinking water metals – such as boron, molybdenum, [manganese](#), and nickel – above the limits EPA has recommended in health advisories for children or adults. In some cases, these pollutants were many times over permissible levels detailed in health advisories. For example, [manganese](#) was 203 times the lifetime health advisory at Paradise Station (KY), molybdenum was 21 times the lifetime health advisory at the Parish Station (TX) and boron was more than 12 times the child health advisory at Prairie Creek Station (IA) and 10 times the same advisory level at Meredosia Station (IL).

In addition, the report provides important new information about seven previously recognized coal ash dump sites, including data documenting concentrations of [arsenic in groundwater](#) that are more toxic than [hazardous waste](#) at the Wateree, Grainger, and Urquhart Stations in South Carolina.

J. Russell Boulding, a hydrogeologist with Boulding Soil-Water Consulting, said: **'Virtually every coal ash site that has adequate monitoring reveals substantive contamination of the underlying groundwater. All you have to do is look. Furthermore, in several cases, the data show the contamination is worsening the longer it continues.'**

The letter to Congress from 2,309 residents near coal ash sites across the U.S. reads in part as follows:

'We know Congress has already heard from industry lobbyists, big contributors, and state bureaucrats. We live near these dumps, and put up with their pollution year after year. Please hear our voices. We know what it is like to suffer through the daily onslaught of blowing ash, drink water from faucets contaminated with ash leachate, and see our wetlands and creeks poisoned with toxic metals like [arsenic](#). We have complained again and again about the endless noise, dust and pollution from trucks dumping coal ash near us while we become more stressed out or sick and the value of our property plummets, with no real response from our states ...'

'Do our lives matter to you? Is protecting [coal ash 'recycling'](#) from a 'stigma' more important than our health or the quality of our water? Even those who believe 'stigma' is real cannot seriously argue that shielding leaking dumps from EPA enforcement somehow makes recycling easier. And ash mixed with other wastes in leaking ponds – now a common practice – cannot be recycled at all. What will you accomplish by requiring federal and state bureaucrats to review, and then approve, disapprove, and reapprove state plans that can never actually be enforced by EPA against polluters? If your own family's [drinking water](#) was being contaminated, would you think haggling over 'plans' the right response?'

The full texts of the EIP report and the citizens' joint letter to Congress are available online at <http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>.

ABOUT EIP

The Environmental Integrity Project (<http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws. EIP has three goals: (1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; (2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and (3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

SOURCE Environmental Integrity Project, Washington, DC



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