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***New Interactive Web Tool Gives Citizens Details About
Tennessee's Toxic Coal Ash***

*Project highlights ongoing problems four years after Kingston, Tenn.,
disaster*

Contacts:

Sandra Diaz, Appalachian Voices, 828-262-1500

Ulla Reeves, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, 828-254-6776 x2

Ann League, Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment, 865-617-2451

Knoxville, Tenn.— Today Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Appalachian Voices, Southern Environmental Law Center, and NC Conservation Network launched the first-ever comprehensive online tool that allows Tennesseans to find specific information about coal ash impoundments near them. The site, www.SoutheastCoalAsh.org, includes information on the health threats associated with this toxic waste from coal-fired power plants, safety ratings of the coal ash impoundments, and how citizens can advocate for strong federal safeguards.

Tennessee is one of nine states covered by the site, which is being launched four years after a massive coal ash dam in Kingston, Tenn., catastrophically failed. The disaster released a billion-gallon flood of coal ash that poisoned some 300 acres, destroyed two dozen homes and filled the Emory River with toxic sludge. The coalition developed the [website](#) to call greater attention to the lurking dangers of coal ash in the South, where almost 450 impoundments hold roughly 118 billion gallons of the toxic waste.

“Tennessee has 44 coal ash ponds, including some that are veritable man-made lakes full toxic compound that threaten our waterways and the public with potential dam failures,” said Sandra Diaz with Appalachian Voices. “SoutheastCoalAsh.org offers concerned citizens in Tennessee a new and easy way to learn if their community or drinking water source is in danger from these largely unregulated coal ash impoundments.”

Despite being found liable for the 2008 coal ash spill by a federal court, the Tennessee Valley Authority, which owns the Kingston power plant and coal ash impoundment, recently ended efforts to dredge Emory River and are now allowing for natural processes to take place. TVA agreed to conduct annual monitoring of 200 acres for 30 years. Almost nine percent of the one billion gallons of coal ash remains in the river, according to official estimates.

The website features an interactive map and database of 100 coal-fired power plants in the Southeast, color-coded by the amount of damage each would inflict if the coal ash dams were to break, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A brief glance at the

map shows how much more work needs to be done to assess these dangers – almost half of the plants in the Southeast have inadequate data for EPA to properly assess the coal ash dams at those sites. Moreover, many of the plants lack adequate water monitoring data to show whether contamination problems exist.

Notably, of those dams that are rated in the Southeast, nearly one-third are “high hazard,” meaning that a dam failure like Kingston would likely cause fatalities. In Tennessee, all of the state’s eight coal-fired power plants have dams that are rated as significant or high hazard.

“Four years ago this month, the massive coal ash impoundment in Kingston collapsed, riveting the nation’s attention on what had been a largely hidden hazard. Now we know what the potential is - and yet EPA has yet to provide adequate regulations for this toxic waste,” Diaz said. “SoutheastCoalAsh.org provides citizens with the information and tools to communicate directly with EPA and their congressional representatives to ask for greater urgency in providing federal protection from toxic coal ash.”

“We need resources like this website because people like me have very few places to get information about the serious dangers of coal ash,” said Ann League, chair of the Energy, Ecology and Environmental Justice Committee of Statewide Organizing for Community eMpowerment. “And while Kingston was a large disaster, there have been other underreported coal ash disaster spills just upstream from the Kingston breach, which have also impacted the Emory, Clinch, and Tennessee rivers. This website helps people to learn, connect the dots, and take action.”

Visitors to the [website](#) can view the information in a variety of ways — an interactive map, aerial photos showing visually the location of coal ash ponds to water resources, fact sheets, tables — and can search for information by zip code, name of power plant, map, quantity of coal ash, name of waterway.

The site features more than a dozen informational pages detailing the health and environmental hazards of coal ash as well as the current legislative and regulatory environment, active legal battles, links to additional articles, news and more. Every coal-fired power plant in the Southeast has a site-specific page, accessible from the interactive map. One click takes the visitor deeper into the data about each plant to find out if there are any known contamination problems at the coal ash impoundment(s) on site, local action groups to contact about that plant, as well as other local, state, regional and federal actions citizens can take.

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