YOUR CAN HELP PROTECT ARDEN'S WATER FROM COAL WASTEWATER

THE PROBLEM

Each year, coal-fired power plants dump millions of pounds of heavy metals into our waterways. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), more than 60 percent of toxic water pollution in the United States comes from coal-fired power plants.

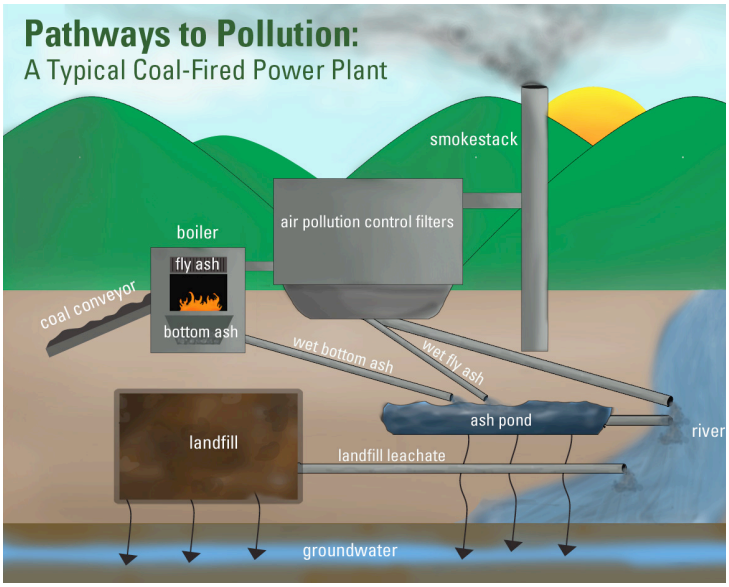
Some of the pollutants that are entering our waterways include **arsenic, lead, selenium, mercury, boron and chromium.** Exposure to these pollutants through drinking water and contaminated fish has been found to cause cancer, birth defects and other health problems.

The main source of these pollutants is coal combustion waste, or coal ash, which is the waste byproduct of burning coal. Coal ash is often mixed with water and stored in leaky earthen impoundments where the highly concentrated toxic metals can easily pollute groundwater.

Duke Energy's own monitoring has shown high levels of iron, manganese, boron and nickel in groundwater near the coal ash impoundment at their Asheville Steam Station in Arden, posing a real threat to people living nearby who get their drinking water from private wells.

Federal guidelines for coal plant water pollution have not been updated since 1982. These rules are so lax that the Allen Steam Station is authorized to discharge an unlimited amount of coal ash wastewater into the French Broad River.

The plant's water pollution permit does not even include enforceable limits on discharges of arsenic, mercury, chromium or any other of the toxic metals that are common in coal combustion waste.



THE SOLUTION

The EPA is in the process of updating the standards for how wastewater from coal-fired power plants is treated for the first time since the original standards were enacted in 1982. The Clean Water Act requires the use of "Best Available Technology" to protect waterways.

EPA is considering eight possible options for how to update these standards. The strongest two options would eliminate most of the toxic wastes from coal-fired power plants by requiring biological and chemical treatments of all the wastewater.

Even more importantly for residents of Arden, these two options would likely require utilities like Duke Energy to phase out their use of wet impoundments for storing coal ash

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and thus eliminate the greatest threat to local drinking water supplies in Arden and surrounding areas.

And here's the icing on the cake: an economic analysis of EPA's proposed rule shows that choosing one of the strongest options would cost most utilities less than one percent of their annual profits and would actually create new jobs in communities near power plants.

YOUR VOICE NEEDED

Unsurprisingly, the electric utility industry is mounting a well-financed campaign to weaken this proposal. We need your help to ensure that the EPA adopts the strongest pollution standard possible. **The public comment period for this proposal ends on September 20, 2013.**

Personalize your comments. Mention your connection to any waterway you love, especially if it is a waterway threatened by coal wastewater. The EPA will receive a number of form comments, and while those are valuable, **real stories about how real people will be impacted will carry more weight.**

SUBMIT YOUR COMMENT

Online at AppVoices.org (an email gets sent to the EPA): appvoices.org/rww/end-power-plant-pollution/

By Mail: Water Docket, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail code: 4203M, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20460. Attention: Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2009-0819. EPA requests three copies.

SAMPLE COMMENT

(We encourage you tell your own story using your own words)

I have lived near Duke/Progress Energy's Asheville Steam Station on the French Broad River for many years and I am afraid to eat the fish due to the chemicals the plant is putting into the river. I am also concerned about the health of my groundwater and my property values due to reports that toxic metals from the coal ash impoundment are contaminating groundwater near the plant.

That's why I am writing to urge EPA to issue a strong rule to protect our rivers, lakes and streams from toxic pollution from coal-fired power plants. I support any option that will require Duke Energy and other utilities to stop storing coal ash and other wastes in leaky impoundments, to use the best biological and chemical treatments available on all of their wastewater, and to use evaporation treatment for sludge waste from air pollution scrubbers.

Appalachian Voices

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