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December 11, 2012

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

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

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*Knoxville, Tenn.* - The Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Appalachian Voices, Southern Environmental Law Center, and NC Conservation Network today launched the first-ever comprehensive online tool that allows Kentuckians to find specific information about coal ash impoundments near them. The site, [www.SoutheastCoalAsh.org](http://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 easy ways for citizens to advocate for strong federal safeguards.

Kentucky is one of nine states featured on the site, which is being launched four years after the massive coal ash dam in Kingston, Tenn., catastrophically failed. The disaster released a billion-gallon flood of coal ash slurry that poisoned some 300 acres, destroyed two dozen homes and filled the Emory River with sludge. The coalition developed the [website](http://www.SoutheastCoalAsh.org) 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.

Kentucky has more coal-fired power plants than any other state in the Southeast, and ranks 5th in the nation for the amount of coal ash generated, according to a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy report.

“Kentucky has 85 coal ash ponds, including some that are veritable man-made lakes full of toxic compounds that threaten our waterways and the public with potential dam failures,” said Sandra Diaz with Appalachian Voices. “[SoutheastCoalAsh.org](http://SoutheastCoalAsh.org) offers concerned citizens in Kentucky a new and easy way to learn if their community or drinking water source is in danger from these largely unregulated coal ash impoundments. ”

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 EPA. 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. About half of Kentucky’s coal plans have significant or high-hazard ash impoundments on site.

"It's been over four years since EPA promised to properly regulate coal ash, but it remains an unregulated toxic waste largely stored in unlined impoundments. Those toxic chemicals pose a huge risk to Kentucky's waters and to public health," said Deborah Payne, health coordinator at the Kentucky Environmental Foundation. "[SoutheastCoalAsh.org](http://SoutheastCoalAsh.org) provides citizens with the information and tools to communicate directly with EPA, community leaders and elected officials about this problem, and ask them to act urgently to protect Kentuckians from toxic coal ash."

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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