

Speak Out About Coal Ash

Join KFTC's Jefferson County chapter at a public hearing and rally in Louisville

Kentuckians are working to transition to sustainable, healthy energy solutions. During this transition, our health should be protected from all forms of coal pollution.

WHEN: Tuesday, September 28th, 2010

WHERE: Seelbach Hilton - 500 Fourth Street
Corner of 4th and Muhammed Ali, Louisville, KY

TIME: Rally begins at 5 p.m. outside the Seelbach Hilton.
Public hearing sessions at 10 a.m. - 12 p.m., 1 - 5 p.m. and 6:30 - 9 p.m. You must register to speak at the hearing online at <http://tiny.cc/51bh2>.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed coal ash safety standards that, if adopted later this year, could require utilities to protect the public from coal ash toxins. Speak at the public hearing and attend the rally to tell the EPA you support passing the best possible coal ash safety standards.

TRANSPORT: Buses are available from some locations. To sign up for a ride, visit <http://kyipl.kintera.org/coalash>.



“It's outrageous that storage and disposal of a substance that contains known cancer-causing pollutants has gone unregulated for so long. Seeing the EPA finally take some steps toward coal ash regulation is great, but I hope they go far enough.”

-Beth Bissmeyer, who lives just a few miles from coal ash dumps in Louisville Metro.

What is Coal Ash?

Coal ash, also called coal combustion waste and coal combustion residue, is what is left over after coal is burned in a power plant. Coal ash is the last step in the life-cycle of coal.

Why is Coal Ash A Health and Environmental Risk?

A 2007 EPA report found that those living near coal ash dumps may have a 1 in 50 chance of getting cancer.

Coal ash, classified as a hazardous waste, contains concentrated heavy metals and other toxins, including arsenic, lead and mercury. These toxins cause a host of health problems, from skin rashes to cancer to death. Coal ash is usually dumped onto land or into ponds at power plants in a poorly contained manner. As a result, we are exposed to it by drinking water contaminated by ash and by breathing air that contains it.

Our missing mountains being dumped into coal ash wastelands across Kentucky.



For more information, contact Colette at colette@kftc.org or (502) 589-3188.
Join KFTC at www.kftc.org to support the local movement around coal ash.

Suggested Talking Points

(adapted from KFTC organizational comments that were submitted to EPA in August)

- EPA should adopt the proposed Subtitle C regulations that close corporate loopholes and regulate coal ash as the toxic substance that it is. Regulating coal ash under the proposed Subtitle D option, in which coal ash is not treated as hazardous and enforcement is left mainly to the industry, is not sufficient.
- The proposed Subtitle C regulations, however, should be strengthened in several ways.

Regulate industrial coal ash, coal ash that fills surface mines and coal ash injected into deep mines, instead of exempting these from regulation as EPA proposes. These unnecessary and dangerous loopholes should be eliminated. The people whose groundwater and waterways are endangered by coal ash leaching from deep and surface mines are the same people whose health is already threatened by coal mining contamination.

- EPA should take all steps necessary to ensure that existing damage to people's health and environment that results from coal ash contamination is addressed and mitigated. Specific recommendations on how this will be done should be added to the proposed regulations.
- After appropriately strict waste regulations are passed, EPA should ensure that the regulations are followed. For this to happen in our state, EPA should refuse to grant Kentucky primacy over these regulations.

Regulatory agencies in this state operate in a culture of willful negligence. There are many documented examples to prove this – some of which our members have presented to EPA in meetings over the last year. The Kentucky Division of Water's (KDOW) failure to enforce water quality standards in Kentucky's waterways, which are primarily damaged by coal-related activities, represents perhaps the most egregious form of this negligence. 2,500 miles of streams in the Eastern Kentucky coal mining region fail to meet water quality standards, with mining named as the known or suspected pollution source (*Kentucky Division of Water Integrated Report on Water Quality to Congress, 2008*).

If giving the federal government primacy over these regulations with the federal government is not possible, EPA should take all steps necessary to ensure enforcement after the rule is adopted, including consistent and ongoing oversight of state activities.

- EPA should take steps to ensure that public dialogue about the proposed rule is fair and honest.

Projections of financial costs and benefits of the two proposed versions of regulations should be adjusted to show a more fair cost comparison. Health costs of not regulating coal ash as toxic should be added into the Subtitle D scenario and "stigma" costs associated with the projected declining use of recycled coal ash should be removed from the Subtitle C scenario. The utility and coal industries lobbied to adjust these cost scenarios so that the Subtitle D option would appear more financially favorable. This is unfair - industrial and corporate voices must not be heard louder than the voices of we who have been paying the true costs of coal for too long.