

COAL ASH CONTAMINATES OUR LIVES

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CAMPAIGN:

Coal Ash



Coal ash is the hazardous waste that remains after coal is burned. Dumped into unlined ponds or mines, the toxins readily leach into drinking water supplies.

KEY RESOURCES:

Coal Ash: Reports and Publications

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On December 22, 2008, more than one billion gallons of toxic coal ash sludge burst through a dam at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston Fossil Plant in Harriman, about 150 miles from Nashville. It was the worst toxic waste spill in U.S. history. (TVA)

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Coal Ash Contaminates Our Lives

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August 13, 2013

Reports from Earthjustice and its partners have documented the growing public health threat from coal ash, including the lack of state-based coal ash disposal regulations, hexavalent chromium contamination in groundwater, and more:



Read Report » App. 1: 137 Damage Cases App. 2: State Comparisons App. 3: State Dam Safety Programs
August 2011 **State of Failure: How States Fail To Protect Our Health And Drinking Water From Toxic Coal Ash**

State of Failure, released by Earthjustice and Appalachian Mountain Advocates, is an exhaustive review of state regulations in 37 states, which together comprise over 98 percent of all coal ash generated nationally.

This study highlights the lack of state-based regulations for coal ash disposal and points to the 12 worst states when it comes to coal ash dumping: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, South Carolina and Virginia.

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February 2011 [EPA's Blind Spot: Hexavalent Chromium in Coal Ash](#)

A report by Earthjustice, Physicians for Social Responsibility and Environmental Integrity Project, *EPA's Blind Spot* shows that scores of leaking coal ash sites across the country are documented sites for hexavalent chromium contamination in groundwater.

Hexavalent chromium is a highly toxic carcinogen when inhaled, and recent studies from the National Toxicology Program indicate that when leaked into drinking water, it also can cause cancer.

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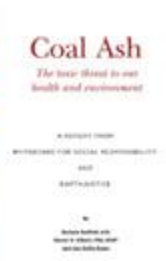
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December 2010 [Re-evaluation of Estimates in U.S. EPA Regulatory Impact Analysis](#)

According to this review conducted by the Environmental Integrity Project, Earthjustice, and the Stockholm Environment Institute's U.S. Center (based at Tufts University), the EPA's claim that coal ash recycling is worth more than \$23 billion a year is more than 20 times higher than the \$1.15 billion that the U.S. government's own data shows is the correct bottom-line number.

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September 2010 [Coal Ash: The Toxic Threat to Our Health and Environment](#)

Water and air in 34 states are being poisoned by the waste of coal-fired power plants—creating major health risks for children and adults—according to the report, *Coal Ash: The Toxic Threat*, released by Earthjustice and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

The ground-breaking study connects the contamination occurring at hundreds of coal ash dumps and waste ponds across the country to health threats such as cancer, nerve damage and impairment of a child's ability to write, read and learn.

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August 2010 [In Harm's Way: Lack of Federal Coal Ash Regulations Endangers Americans and their Environment](#)

In Harm's Way identified additional coal ash dump sites in 21 states that are contaminating drinking water or surface water with arsenic and other heavy metals.

The report by the Environmental Integrity Project, Earthjustice and the Sierra Club documents the fact that state governments are not adequately monitoring the coal combustion waste disposal sites and that the EPA needs to enact strong new regulations to protect the public.

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May 2010 [Failing the Test: Unintended Consequences of Controlling HAPs from Coal Plants](#)

In December 2009, the EPA produced a report examining the fate of pollution captured in smokestacks at coal-fired power plants. The report was quietly posted to the EPA's website, but offered groundbreaking results.

The new testing method by the EPA's Office of Research and Development revealed that pollutants such as arsenic, antimony, chromium and selenium, can leach from coal ash at levels dozens and sometimes hundreds of times greater than the federal drinking water standard. *Failing the Test* summarizes the EPA's findings.

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February 2010 [Out of Control: Mounting Damages from Coal Ash Waste Sites](#)

This major report by Earthjustice and the Environmental Integrity Project identified 31 additional coal ash contamination sites in 14 states, with data showing arsenic and other toxic metal levels in contaminated water at some coal ash disposal sites at up to 145 times federally permissible levels.

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January 2009 **Waste Deep: Filling Mines with Ash is Profit for Industry, But Poison for People**

Released in the wake of coal ash disasters at two Tennessee Valley Authority power plants, *Waste Deep* documents the unseen threat posed by toxic coal ash dumped in active and abandoned coal mines.

The report casts a spotlight on minefilling, the practice of dumping coal ash into active and abandoned coal mines. This unregulated disposal method has poisoned streams and drinking water supplies across the country with arsenic, lead, chromium, selenium, and other toxins.

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Read Report » Att. 1: Surface Impoundments Analyzed Att. 2: Landfills

Analyzed Att. 3: Data Reported to EIA

May 2009 **Coming Clean: What the EPA Knows about the Dangers of Coal Ash**

New analysis of data by the EPA shows that those who live near coal ash dumps face elevated cancer risks.

This report, by the Environmental Integrity Project and Earthjustice, analyzes the EPA data—buried for years by the Bush administration—finding that residents who live near coal ash waste ponds have as much as a 1 in 50 chance of getting cancer from drinking water contaminated by arsenic, one of the most common, and most dangerous, pollutants from coal ash.