

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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## LEAGUE RECOMMENDS SALTSTONE TECHNOLOGY FOR DUKE'S COAL ASH DON'T DUMP COAL ASH ON OUR COMMUNITIES"

Today at a press conference in Raleigh, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League released a technical report which details the dangers of landfilling coal ash and recommends the proven saltstone technology for the coal ash at Duke Energy's fourteen power plants.

The report entitled "Coal Ash Disposition: The Alternative for North Carolina," describes the saltstone technology which would encase the coal ash waste and isolate the toxins from the soil, air and water.

The League's executive director, Lou Zeller, who authored the report, explained "Fly ash is the dry residue from burning of coal captured by the pollution control devices. Bottom ash collects in the bottom of the boiler during the coal burning process. Both types of ash are laced with toxic elements, including arsenic, chromium, lead and mercury. Also, radioactive strontium and uranium remain after the burning process and are concentrated in the ash." The saltstone process recommended by the League was developed by the US Department of Energy.

The report provides information about the severe problems faced by the neighbors of a landfill in Perry County, Alabama which received the coal ash from the infamous spill in Kingston, Tennessee. This hazardous waste has damaged the environment and threatened public health. The Arrowhead Landfill is the subject of a civil rights lawsuit filed by Earthjustice.

Therese, Vick, the League's Raleigh-based community organizer, reported that even without toxic coal ash all landfills will leak, a point made by the US EPA in the

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Federal Register. She said, "The North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources must be clear in stating that they will not allow Duke Energy to send coal ash to off-site landfills."

NC WARN's Jim Warren spoke at the press conference to denounce landfilling as the wrong choice for coal ash disposal. Warren said, "Duke Energy's mismanagement of coal ash has now expanded into an enormous toxic waste challenge. State history makes clear that there are no quick, easy fixes, and the solution must provide justice for communities currently impacted – and for those who might be targeted to have the toxic waste dumped on them."

Representatives of community groups from NC counties which have commercial mega-dumps spoke about their concerns. Frances Blalock, a founder of Person County PRIDE, said, "Because of the future plans to take water from the Dan River for some of Roxboro's drinking water, we want to be kept aware of all efforts to clean up the river. Our county is also concerned with the disposal of the coal ash that may be moved to lined landfills. This can become another issue that impacts Person County because we have several sites that may become destinations for this ash."

Cary Rodgers, a member of Pee Dee WALL in Anson County and the environmental justice organizer for the League, concluded that dumping coal ash on poor minority communities is unjust and unacceptable. PC PRIDE and Pee Dee WALL are chapters of the statewide League.

Press conference participants will deliver the report and their recommendations to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The groups are planning meetings with members of the legislature.

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