Hold Dominion Accountable

No More Coal Ash Dumping in Our Rivers!

Dominion Virginia Power is fighting for a license to keep polluting our most beloved rivers – the James, the Potomac, and the Elizabeth – with toxic waste left behind from decades of burning dirty coal at power plants across the common wealth.

Coal Ash: The Toxic Truth

Coal ash contains the toxic remnants of burning coal, including arsenic, mercury, lead, and over a dozen other heavy metals, many of them toxic! Coal ash is mixed with water and stored in open, often unlined and leaking, ponds. This toxic coal ash wastewater can leach out of the ponds and pollute nearby groundwater and waterways. The EPA recently found that people who live near coal ash disposal sites have a 1 in 50 chance of getting cancer from arsenic in their drinking water.10

Dominion and Virginia’s Coal Ash

Dominion owns eleven coal ash ponds at four power plants across the state: in Dumfries, Fluvanna, Chesterfield, and Chesapeake. As part of a federally mandated closing process, the utility is required to close them. Unsurprisingly, Dominion is seeking permission from Virginia regulators to do so in a way that protects their profits at the expense of our health – draining the coal ash wastewater from these ponds into Virginia’s rivers, and “capping” the remaining pits in place – instead of moving the toxic waste to modern landfills.

To start dumping and “capping”, Dominion needs to receive two permits for each power plant:

- The first, a wastewater discharge permit from the State Water Control Board and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), covers the removal of treated water from the ponds.
- The second, a solid waste permit from DEQ, dictates the terms of the permanent closure of these ponds under Virginia’s solid waste management regulations.

In January, the State Water Control Board – an advisory board appointed by the Governor – approved lax permits allowing Dominion to dump 350 million gallons11 of coal ash wastewater from the Bremo Power Station in Fluvanna County into the James River, and more than 150 million gallons12 from the Possum Point Power Plant in Prince William County into Quantico Creek, a tributary of the Potomac – a combined total of half a billion total gallons of toxic coal ash wastewater poised to flow into Virginia’s rivers.

A public firestorm erupted in response.
Dominion and Virginia’s DEQ

Since receiving its first two permits, Dominion has admitted to draining nearly 30 million gallons of untreated coal ash wastewater into Quantico Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River, last spring. At the time, DEQ denied any knowledge of the dumping.[v] Once the news broke, DEQ claimed the dumping was done legally, under existing stormwater runoff permits, but experts in Virginia don’t agree. And we’ve since learned that DEQ Director David Paylor accepted lavish gifts from Dominion – including a trip to the 2013 Master’s Golf Tournament in Georgia, valued at $2,300 – the very utility he is tasked with regulating.[vi]

Growing Resistance in Virginia

Over the past few months, we’ve seen fierce resistance to Dominion’s dangerous coal ash disposal plans – thousands of Virginians have called for DEQ to revoke the lax permits they issued in January, and hundreds marched through the streets of Richmond to demand that DEQ be held responsible for its weak oversight. Activists have staged sit-ins at the agency’s headquarters, and creative tongue-in-cheek actions to draw attention to the cozy relationship between DEQ and Dominion. And affected counties and local riverkeepers have filed suit, alleging violations of the Clean Water Act.

NO MORE DUMPING!

Chesapeake Climate Action Network and our partners are committed to fighting Dominion’s plans to pollute our clean water with the toxic legacy of their addiction to coal.

Join the movement to hold Dominion accountable!

Text COALASH to 38470 to get involved.

TAKE ACTION! To learn more visit www.domtruth.org.

To get involved, text COALASH to 38470 or email CCAN’s Field Organizer, Drew Gallagher, at drew@chesapeakeclimate.org.


WAMU, http://wamu.org/news/16/03/14/has_dominions_political_power_clouded_the_fight_over_coal_ash.