



ALASKA COAL ASH DISPOSAL IN PONDS AND LANDFILLS

Summary of Coal Ash Generating Facilities in Alaska

Plant <sup>i</sup>	Operator	Disposal Method	County
Eielson AFB Central Heat & Power Plant	U S Air Force-Eielson AFB	landfill <sup>ii</sup>	Fairbanks North Star
University of Alaska Fairbanks	University of Alaska	Disposed of by a contractor (including stockpiling in unlined landfills) <sup>iii</sup>	Fairbanks North Star
Utility Plants Section	Doyon Utilities	landfill <sup>iv</sup>	Fairbanks North Star
Healy	Golden Valley Elec Assn Inc	landfill <sup>v</sup>	Denali Borough
Aurora Energy LLC Chena	Aurora Energy LLC	Disposed of by a contractor (including stockpiling in unlined landfills) <sup>vi</sup>	Fairbanks North Star

Amount of coal ash generated per year: 46,179 tons.<sup>vii</sup>



Image from Alaska Community Action on Toxics

Refuge and adjacent to a farmers market in Fairbanks.<sup>xi</sup> The ash in the image at the left is dumped in an unlined, uncovered pit, where any wind creates an ash dust cloud that covers people and goods at the nearby farmers market.<sup>xii</sup>

**Coal Ash Health Threats:** All of the coal burned in Alaska originates at the Usibelli coal mine near Denali National Park. This coal is low-grade and produces a toxic waste stream when burned.<sup>viii</sup> Alaska Community Action on Toxics sampled Alaskan coal ash and found high concentrations of arsenic, vanadium, and mercury.<sup>ix</sup> Because the landfills in Alaska are all unlined,<sup>x</sup> there is a high risk that these toxic constituents could leach into groundwater wherever they are stored. The waste trucked from the Aurora Energy and University of Alaska Fairbanks facilities are of particular concern, as it has been stockpiled in unlined landfills near highly populated and environmentally sensitive areas—including near a Wildlife

**Deficiencies in Alaska Law:** AK excludes coal ash from the definition of industrial solid waste, thereby exempting it from liner, leachate collection, final cover, and groundwater monitoring requirements—leaving the disposal of ash virtually unregulated.<sup>xiii</sup> In addition, AK allows for the use of coal ash as fill.<sup>xiv</sup>

**Coal Ash and Environmental Justice in Alaska:** In zip codes containing coal-fired power plants in Alaska, low-income individuals are over-represented by 47%, while people of color are over-represented by 4%. These figures compare the number of low-income individuals and people of color actually present in these zip codes with the number that would be expected based on state averages.

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<sup>i</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). Database of coal combustion waste surface impoundments (2009). Information collected by EPA from industry responses to Information Collection Request letters issued to the companies on March 9, 2009.

<sup>ii</sup> Sierra Club—Alaska, Dirty Coal Waste Disposal in Alaska, *Sierra Borealis Alaska Report* (2010), available at <http://alaska.sierraclub.org/newsletter/pdfs/June%202010.pdf>.

<sup>iii</sup> Sarah Petras, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, *Coal Ash in Alaska* 6 (2011), available at [http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal\\_Development/Coal\\_Ash\\_in\\_Alaska\\_Feb\\_2011.pdf](http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal_Development/Coal_Ash_in_Alaska_Feb_2011.pdf).

<sup>iv</sup> Sierra Club—Alaska, Dirty Coal Waste Disposal in Alaska, *Sierra Borealis Alaska Report* (2010), available at <http://alaska.sierraclub.org/newsletter/pdfs/June%202010.pdf>.

<sup>v</sup> *Id.*

<sup>vi</sup> Sarah Petras, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, *Coal Ash in Alaska* 6 (2011), available at [http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal\\_Development/Coal\\_Ash\\_in\\_Alaska\\_Feb\\_2011.pdf](http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal_Development/Coal_Ash_in_Alaska_Feb_2011.pdf).

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. EPA, *Regulatory Impact Analysis for EPA's Proposed RCRA Regulation of Coal Combustion Residues (CCR) Generated by the Electric Utility Industry*, Exhibit 3D (August 2010).

<sup>viii</sup> Sierra Club—Alaska, Dirty Coal Waste Disposal in Alaska, *Sierra Borealis Alaska Report* (2010), available at <http://alaska.sierraclub.org/newsletter/pdfs/June%202010.pdf>.

<sup>ix</sup> Sarah Petras, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, *Coal Ash in Alaska* 10-13 (2011), available at [http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal\\_Development/Coal\\_Ash\\_in\\_Alaska\\_Feb\\_2011.pdf](http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal_Development/Coal_Ash_in_Alaska_Feb_2011.pdf).

<sup>x</sup> Sierra Club—Alaska, Dirty Coal Waste Disposal in Alaska, *Sierra Borealis Alaska Report* (2010), available at <http://alaska.sierraclub.org/newsletter/pdfs/June%202010.pdf>

<sup>xi</sup> *Id.*

<sup>xii</sup> Sarah Petras, Alaska Community Action on Toxics, *Coal Ash in Alaska* 6 (2011), available at [http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal\\_Development/Coal\\_Ash\\_in\\_Alaska\\_Feb\\_2011.pdf](http://www.akaction.org/Publications/Coal_Development/Coal_Ash_in_Alaska_Feb_2011.pdf).

<sup>xiii</sup> 18 AAC 60.990(63).

<sup>xiv</sup> 18 ACC 60.007.