

Status of Coal Ash Disposal Units

11/1/2019

Owners and operators have reported compliance information for **737 coal ash surface impoundments and landfills** regulated by the 2015 Coal Ash Rule to date, located in **43 states and Puerto Rico**.¹ Some units are now allegedly closed in place or by removal, and others are not yet required to complete certain demonstrations, so compliance requirements vary by unit and are not applicable to all units. This document summarizes compliance information for units required to meet each compliance requirements to date.² These numbers are current best estimates.³

95 percent of coal ash ponds are unlined

At least 95 percent of the coal ash ponds regulated by the CCR rule are unlined, which means that their toxic chemicals flow freely into the underlying groundwater. Of 442 surface impoundments, only 23 (5 percent) have documented that they are lined. The remaining 419 impoundments (95 percent) are unlined.

These coal ash ponds are located at 195 plants in 36 states.

Almost 70 percent of coal ash ponds are located within five feet of groundwater

Of 388 impoundments reporting, 226 coal ash ponds (67 percent) are located within five feet of the uppermost aquifer.

These surface impoundments are located at 125 coal plants (67 percent of applicable plants) in 30 states.

92 percent of coal plants are contaminating groundwater with toxic chemicals above federal safe levels for drinking water

Of 187 coal plants with regulated ash ponds and available data, 92 percent have one or more ash pond leaking above federal safe levels of drinking water.⁴ These plants are located in 37 states.

¹ See, "List of Publicly Accessible Internet Sites Hosting Compliance Data and Information Required by the Disposal of Coal Combustion Residuals Rule" at <https://www.epa.gov/coalash/list-publicly-accessible-internet-sites-hosting-compliance-data-and-information-required>

² For more information on the compliance status of individual coal ash ponds, see www.earthjustice.org/coalash/map.

³ For previous estimates and additional information, see D.C. Circuit Case No. 18-1289, Addendum to Motion of Waterkeeper Alliance *et al.* (Dec. 17, 2018).

⁴ Environmental Integrity Project & Earthjustice, Coal's Poisonous Legacy: Groundwater Contaminated by Coal Ash Across the U.S. (Mar. 2, 2019, rev. July 11, 2019), <https://www.environmentalintegrity.org/reports/coals-poisonous-legacy/>