



## Coal Ash in Georgia – Legislative Solutions

Coal ash is what's left behind after burning coal to produce electricity, and it's toxic.

It contains dangerous heavy metals and carcinogens including arsenic and lead which have been linked to lung and heart problems, stomach ailments, and premature death.

Georgia Power plans to spend up to \$7 billion to dispose of millions of tons of coal ash in leaking pits around some of Georgia's current and closed coal plants. These disposal pits will not include liners that will help keep the toxins in coal ash out of waterways. For example:



\* At Plant Wansley in Heard Co., Georgia Power proposes to permanently leave **more than 15 million tons of coal ash submerged under 80 feet of groundwater** directly adjacent to the Chattahoochee River. [1]

\* At Plant McDonough in Cobb Co., Georgia Power proposes leaving **approximately 5 million tons of coal ash in unlined pits sitting in groundwater along the Chattahoochee River**, which will create contaminated liquid waste that must be captured before it flows into the Chattahoochee. [2]

Coal ash is already in Georgia's water.

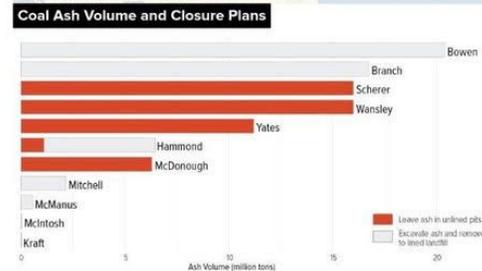
An analysis of the Georgia Power's well water tests found toxic coal ash pollutants are leaking into groundwater at 92 percent of Georgia coal-fired power plants.[3]

Toxins, including arsenic and thallium, have been found in surface waters near coal ash ponds in Juliette, GA.[4]

Coal ash contaminants have been detected in groundwater next to MSW landfills in Georgia that have received coal ash.[5]

Smart Legislation is needed to protect Georgia Communities and their drinking water from toxic coal ash contamination.

- \* **Clean drinking water must be provided** quickly by Georgia Power if coal ash toxins are found in a community's drinking water.
- \* To protect drinking water and our rivers, lakes, and streams, **liners must be required for all coal ash storage pits.**
- \* Coal ash should be prohibited in MSW landfills that are located near drinking water sources or waterways that are used for swimming and fishing.



Prepared by the Georgia Water Coalition - 1/27/2021 - For More Information contact [jennette@environmentgeorgia.org](mailto:jennette@environmentgeorgia.org)

[1] See Georgia Power's Proposed Closure Plan for Plant Wansley, submitted to GA EPD, November 2018.

[2] See Georgia Power's Proposed Closure Plan for Plant McDonough, submitted to GA EPD, November 2018.

[3] See "Georgia at a Crossroads," <https://environmentalintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Georgia-coal-ash-report.pdf>

[4] See "Ashes to Ashes," <https://grist.org/energy/ive-quit-drinking-the-water-what-its-like-to-live-next-to-americas-largest-coal-plant/>.

[5] See "Coal Ash Raises Concerns at Second South Georgia Landfill." Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2016. <https://bit.ly/3cfVCTB>