

COAL ASH FACT SHEET

WHAT IS COAL ASH AND WHY IS IT DANGEROUS?

Coal Ash (aka Coal Combustion Residuals, or CCRs) is the toxic waste formed from the burning of coal in coal-fired power plants. CCRs contain toxins that can cause serious health problems. For example:

- Arsenic can cause cancers of skin, bladder, lung, and kidneys and damage cardiovascular and nervous systems.
- Lead and Mercury can cause childhood developmental delays, decreased intelligence, and behavior problems.
- Cadmium can cause childhood developmental problems, and, if inhaled, kidney and lung disease.
- Hexavalent chromium, made famous by Erin Brockovich, can cause anemia and cancer.

Although these toxins can harm adults, children are the most vulnerable because their organs, including the brain, are developing, and their exposure is greater as they ingest more per unit of body weight.

WHY ARE THE DANGERS OF COAL ASH IMPORTANT TO SOUTHEAST GEORGIA?

The Broadhurst Landfill, located in Wayne County, is owned by Republic Services, a Fortune 500 company that owns and operates over 2,700 entities. In January, 2016, it was discovered that Central Virginia Properties, a subsidiary of Republic Services, applied for a permit to use approximately 25 acres of wetlands to construct a rail spur, allowing them to bring in up to 10,000 tons of coal ash per day. It was later uncovered that between 2006 and 2014, Republic Services had dumped 800,000 tons of coal ash from another state at Broadhurst, and that in 2011, there was a release of toxins from coal ash into the groundwater. The contaminated groundwater was discovered in December of 2011 and reported to the Georgia EPD in a letter the following spring. Republic continued to take coal ash until 2014, but neither Republic nor the EPD ever informed local citizens about the release. As of November, 2016, clean-up had not been finalized.

WHY IS THE BROADHURST LANDFILL A POOR SITE FOR STORING COAL ASH?

Most experts believe that lined landfills are *currently* the safest places to store CCRs, and Broadhurst is a lined landfill. However, the Broadhurst location is especially susceptible to water contamination. The landfill is surrounded by wetlands. Many wetlands have already been mitigated (wetlands developed in North Georgia so that those on site could be dried up) for the dump to exist. On the landfill property is the Penholloway Creek, which flows into the Altamaha River and empties into the Atlantic Ocean on the Georgia coast. The Altamaha represents one third of Georgia's watershed and is the third largest contributor of fresh water to the Atlantic on North America's East Coast. It is rich in wildlife and vital to Georgia's coastal ecosystem. Broadhurst also lies above the Floridan Aquifer, which provides drinking water for 10 million people in Georgia and Florida. Between the landfill liner and the aquifer is ground that has been identified by hydrologists as porous and conducive to water contamination.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PROTECT SOUTHEAST GEORGIA?

A grass-roots group of citizens called No Ash At All has formed to give voice to those who want to stop the rail spur and coal ash at Broadhurst. This group recommends:

- Visit the website noashatall.org to join the citizens' group and/or learn more about the coal ash issue.
- Write the EPD and ask for amendments to their new CCR regulations that require landfill sites to be studied for the risk of water contamination before coal ash is allowed.
- Write state legislators and ask for new laws to protect our water from coal ash in landfills with risky locations.
- Urge wealthy companies like Republic Services and individuals like Bill Gates (the major stockholder in Republic Services) to invest monies into research to find safe methods of dealing with coal ash.
- Donate to Center for a Sustainable Coast and earmark for "coal ash legal fund."

