

# BLUE RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL DEFENSE LEAGUE

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LEAGUE DEMANDS: "DON'T DUMP COAL ASH ON OUR COMMUNITIES"

Today the statewide Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League announced a new campaign to block the landfilling of coal ash from Duke Energy's plants. Staff and volunteers are working with county commissioners and environmental justice advocates to prevent this hazardous waste from contaminating groundwater and drinking water in the state's mega-dump communities.

Governor Pat McCrory and Democrats in the NC General Assembly have expressed support for hauling the toxic ash from plant sites to double-lined landfills. The League warns that landfilling would endanger public health and the environment and is nothing more than a shell game.

Louis Zeller, BREDL Executive Director, said, "Duke's coal ash should be classified as hazardous waste. It contains cadmium, lead, chromium, arsenic and radioactive isotopes and cannot be landfilled safely no matter how many plastic liners." Next week Zeller will release a technical report which centers on alternatives which would keep the wastes on Duke's property and isolate the poisons from the air, soil and water.

The League's Executive Committee has determined that the full liability for the coal ash should be borne by Duke Energy. One huge disadvantage for mega-dump communities is that liability for contamination is pro-rated. In other words, a ton of

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Duke's hazardous coal ash could be equated with a ton of a local school system's solid waste. The League believes that would be an injustice.

For over twenty years the League has identified the dangers of waste landfilling. The US Environmental Protection Agency has stated on the record that all landfills will leak. Further, monitoring wells at mega-dumps are too far apart to identify narrow fingers of water pollution which, ironically, the liner's mask. They are capable of detecting only large plumes of contamination.

Cary Rodgers, BREDL's NC Environmental Justice Organizer who resides in Anson County, said, "The people who live near this mega-dump are primarily African American and many of them are poor. Handing coal ash over to a commercial company which dumps for dollars is a grave danger to our groundwater and nearby residents."

Zeller added, "The League has shared our formal position against coal ash landfilling with other NC organizations and hopes that they will join us in opposing this quick and dirty solution."

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