

Ms. Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

October 25, 2010

Dear Administrator Jackson,

As communities of faith, we are writing to respond to the rulemaking process underway that would regulate coal ash and support the option of identifying coal ash as a toxic material (as suggested in Subtitle C of the proposed rule). In the last two years, two energy-related disasters have occurred in the United States. First, more than 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash burst through its dam in late 2008 as families in Kingston, Tennessee celebrated Christmas and prepared for the New Year. More recently, we watched the Deepwater Horizon oil spill unfold for months on end, inflicting great suffering on families and communities along the Gulf Coast.

While we cannot undo the damage that has already been done, we can and must find ways to prevent these types of human-made disasters stemming from our country's growing need for energy.

We are encouraged by your proposed rule and believe that coal ash should be regulated as a toxic substance. Such regulation would require more appropriate storage and hopefully would prevent further water contamination from coal ash and other coal combustion residues (CCRs). With these stronger regulations, we will be protecting all of God's creation from the harmful effects of arsenic, lead and other chemicals found in coal ash.

The water and soil contamination that has already occurred as a result of coal ash and other CCRs is having and will continue to have devastating effects on people, plants, animals, and the whole of creation upon which we all depend on for life and well-being. A recent report highlighted that there are 137 toxic contamination sites in 34 states around the country that are directly linked to the storage and disposal of coal ash and CCRs.

Not only does coal ash threaten public health generally, it disproportionately affects low-income communities and communities of color. More than 50 percent of the 137 coal ash sites around the country are in low-income neighborhoods, and the coal ash cleaned up after the Tennessee spill was shipped to a low-income, predominately African American community in Alabama.

The evidence that affirms the need to classify coal ash as a toxic substance is prevalent. We encourage you to regulate coal ash using subtitle C of your proposed rule and we urge you to seek the strongest possible regulations for coal ash and other CCRs. We look forward to working with you to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for all of God's children and creation.

Sincerely,

Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

The Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Franciscan Action Network

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Medical Mission Sisters Alliance for Justice

Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office

National Council of Churches (USA)

New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light

Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness

Union for Reform Judaism

Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society