

**Talking Points for Cliffside coal ash cleanup hearings  
Monday, March 14, 6pm**

**Two locations** (attend whichever is easier for you):

Isothermal Community College Auditorium, 286 ICC Loop Rd, Spindale

AND Boiling Springs Town Hall, 114 E College Ave, Boiling Springs

Written comments: [rogerscomments@ncdenr.gov](mailto:rogerscomments@ncdenr.gov) by April 18th

The state has ranked 2 coal ash basins at Cliffside 'low priority' and the 3<sup>rd</sup> basin 'low to intermediate priority.' This means, instead of being excavated and cleaned up, the coal ash will left there where it can continue to leach toxic metals into the neighboring community.

**Tell NC DEQ that the community around Cliffside is NOT a low priority!**

**The coal ash at Cliffside is a health hazard for neighbors and downstream communities:**

- **At least eleven drinking water wells in close proximity to the coal ash ponds are contaminated with pollutants associated with coal ash.** Duke Energy is only providing a small amount of bottled water to families even though they've been told not to drink, cook with, or bathe with their water. **There are reports of health issues in the surrounding community**, including cardiovascular issues and cancers, which can be associated with long-term consumption of cobalt and hexavalent chromium.
- **NC DEQ does not have the evidence to support their claim that nearby residents' well water pollution is not coming from the coal ash impoundments.** They claim that no wells are affected, but they acknowledge incomplete knowledge of how groundwater is moving, including: incomplete modeling of movement of water in fractured bedrock for upgradient and side-gradient supply wells; incomplete background concentration determinations, amount and extent of coal ash stored here, and heterogeneities in the subsurface! The risk to groundwater should be assumed to be high since so many wells are contaminated and on-site groundwater is known to be contaminated, and the priority level should be adjusted accordingly.
- The polluted groundwater from all three basins flows into the Broad River and Suck Creek, which are drinking water sources for Shelby, Gaffney and other downstream municipalities. The ponds at Cliffside contaminate surface water with illegal discharges into the Broad River and Suck Creek with arsenic (37 times safe limit) , thallium (3 times safe limit), chromium (51 times safe limit), and cobalt (26 times safe limit). The Broad River is a drinking water source for downstream Gaffney SC and Columbia, SC.
- Coal ash left in place in the two impoundments on the banks of the Broad River, if capped in place, will continue to pollute ground and surface waters with toxins, as capping and dewatering does not stop stormwater from percolating through unlined coal ash pits.
- The onsite landfill at the Cliffside site is actively receiving coal ash from other Duke Energy sites like Asheville that are considered high risk. The Cliffside onsite landfill should receive the coal ash that is already at the Cliffside site to decrease transportation hazards and to reduce the overall potential for contamination to the Cliffside community.

### **The dams are currently risky and could fail:**

- The impoundments holding in the coal ash at the Cliffside basins are currently considered “high-risk” meaning if they failed it would be disastrous. The state acknowledges that repairs are needed to all of the impoundments for them to be considered low-risk. It’s totally illogical for dams to be rated on their future risk AFTER repairs are made, and the Coal Ash Management Act wasn’t designed to rate the dams on the future risk, but rather their current risk
- Currently, **all the dams have received recent notice of deficiencies for many of the same problems that caused the Dan River Spill.** In the Coal Combustion Residuals Annual Surface Impoundment Reports Duke Energy is required to file about the dams on their website under the new EPA regulations, engineer inspections acknowledge existing structural problems at Cliffside such as: pipe cracking and leaks at most joints, large animal burrows and groundhog dens; multiple holes in the embankment dikes up to 3 feet deep, erosion and soil liquefaction, tree growth, and uncertainty about the steel reinforcement of the dams. Many of these are considered threats to the integrity of the dams, but are just being monitored with no current work orders to repair them.
- The high risk Asheville site that is actively sending coal ash to the onsite landfill at Cliffside only has the existing conditions of erosion and seepage pipe issues, all of which had work orders to be fixed as of Duke’s CCR Annual Surface Impoundment Report for Asheville. Some pipe structures at the Asheville impoundments were even noted to be **in good condition with no recommended repairs. If the impoundments at the Asheville site are considered high priority, considering the much worse conditions of the Cliffside impoundments, the Cliffside basins should also be ranked as high priority.**