

EPA delays decision on coal ash waste disposal, reuse

Dec. 18 -- A decision on coal ash waste disposal and reuse, expected this month from the U.S. EPA, has been delayed, the federal agency said Dec. 17.

EPA said its decision on regulating coal ash waste from power plants will be delayed "for a short period due to the complexity of the analysis the agency is currently finishing."

A timeline was not given for when the decision would be completed.

The Environmental Integrity Project, Earthjustice, Natural Resources Defense Council and the Sierra Club issued a joint statement saying they were disappointed with the announcement, and hoped to see a decision in January.

Coal ash, a coal combustion byproduct from coal fired power plants, received national attention after the December 2008 coal ash spill in Kingston, Tenn. The Tennessee Valley Authority's containment pond failed, sending 5 million cubic yards of water and coal fly ash of coal sludge into the surrounding area, destroying three homes and damaging nine others. So far, the TVA has spent \$231 million to clean up the spill from the coal ash pond.

Cleanup costs for the spill are currently estimated to cost between \$933 million and \$1.2 billion. In its annual report, the TVA noted 14 lawsuits connected to the spill have been filed in federal court.

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