

EPA announces action to prevent coal ash releases

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WASHINGTON — Responding to last year's **massive coal ash spill** at a Tennessee Valley Authority facility in Kingston, TN, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on March 9 laid out new efforts to prevent future threats to human health and the environment, the agency reported in a March 9 **news release**.

The EPA said its plan includes measures to gather critical coal ash impoundment information from electric utilities nationwide, conduct on-site assessments to determine structural integrity and vulnerabilities, order cleanup and repairs where needed, and develop new regulations for future safety.

EPA contacted electric utilities that have surface impoundments or similar units via letters mailed on March 9. The utilities are required to provide information about the structural integrity of their units; EPA estimates there may be as many as 300 such units.

The December 22 spill of 1.1 billion gallons from a retention pond used by the Kingston TVA steam plant flooded more than 300 acres of land, damaging homes and property. The 5.4 million cubic yards of displaced coal fly ash made its way into the Emory River, which flows into the Clinch River. Kingston's water supply intake is located on the Tennessee River about one-half mile upstream from the point where the Clinch River empties into the Tennessee.

EPA said it also is moving forward to develop regulations to address the management of coal combustion residuals, with the proposed rule to be ready for public comment by the end of the year.