

Senators call on EPA to inspect coal ash impoundments

March 6 -- U.S. Sens. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., and Tom Carper, D-Dela., have introduced a resolution calling on the U.S. EPA to immediately inspect all coal ash impoundments in the United States.

Boxer, chairwoman of the Senate environment committee, and Carper, chairman of the Clean Air and Nuclear Safety Subcommittee, also want the agency to propose and issue as quickly as possible rules to regulate coal combustion waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Senate Resolution 64 also calls on the Tennessee Valley Authority to become a national leader in technological innovation, low-cost power and environmental stewardship.

The TVA, a federally owned public utility, spilled 5.4 million cubic yards of ash across 275 acres at its Kingston Fossil Plant in Roane County, Tenn., Dec. 22. Cleanup costs could reach \$825 million.

"The Kingston coal ash spill is an ongoing tragedy that must not be repeated, and we have the laws on the books to act now," Sen. Boxer said.

"We cannot afford to have another tragedy like the recent TVA ash spill that threatened public health and safety," Carper said. "The time has come for the Environmental Protection Agency to give industry the guidelines it needs to safely store this hazardous waste."

The coal sludge burst through a dike at the site destroying three homes and damaging nine others.

The U.S. EPA has studied regulating coal fly ash for decades and determined in 2000 that it did not warrant being regulated as a hazardous waste, leaving the regulation of coal ash to the states.

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