

Utilities plan to make coal ash impoundments safer

Feb. 8 -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said 22 electric utilities have detailed their plans to make coal ash impoundments safer.

The action plans are a response to EPA's assessment reports on the structural integrity of these impoundments that the agency made public last September. The EPA began surveying coal ash impoundments after the failure of one such coal ash pond at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston plant.

"EPA is committed to making communities across the country safer places to live," said Mathy Stanislaus, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. "The information we are releasing today shows that we continue to make progress in our efforts to prevent future coal ash spills."

The government agency will now provide copies of on-site inspections of coal ash ponds and impoundments at electric facilities, along with action plans where needed. The current release details recommendations for improvements of 43 impoundments at 22 facilities. Many of these facilities have already begun implementing government recommendations.

Also released today were assessment reports at an additional 40 coal ash impoundments at 16 nationwide facilities. Most of the 40 impoundments have a rating of "high" or "significant" hazard potential.

More information: <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/nonhaz/industrial/special/fossil/surveys2/index.htm>

Contact Waste & Recycling News reporter Amanda Smith-Teutsch at 330-865-6166 or asmith-teutsch@crain.com