

Christina Krost

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My name is **Christina Krost**. I am the Southern Illinois Outreach Coordinator for Faith in Place, an interfaith environmental justice organization. I'm a person of faith, a mother, and a concerned citizen.

I appreciate the chance to submit my comments about why we need strong coal ash rules to protect human health and the environment for all Illinoisans.

My husband is a United Methodist pastor, and in our denomination, we move around to different churches as our bishop assigns. My family and I have lived in several communities around Illinois: Tiskilwa, Neoga, Harrisburg, and Mattoon. **In the 8 years we've lived and served in Illinois, we've never lived more than 35 miles away from a coal ash pond or coal-fired power plant.**

I have three daughters, and my oldest developed respiratory issues when we moved to Harrisburg, battling pneumonia twice in a 1 year span. We tried medication, underwent testing, and visited a pediatric pulmonologist—all at great financial cost even with insurance, but that's another conversation. **I can't say that her problems were related directly to environmental impacts. But neither can I dismiss it completely.**

As a mother and a person of faith, I believe I am called to love and protect my neighbor and help build healthier communities. As I've done my research, I've learned that pollutants like thallium, cobalt, arsenic, boron, lithium, and selenium are present at unsafe levels in coal ash pits which can leech into groundwater. These can cause reproductive and developmental problems, can harm the heart, blood, and thyroid, cause cancer, neurological damage, low birth weight, and stunted growth. And all of these pollutants are toxic to plant and animal life.

I support the proposed rules like strong groundwater monitoring standards and worker protections through the creation of "Safety and Health Plans". **Thank you for including these key protections in the rule making so far.**

But I ask the IEPA and Pollution Control Board to regulate coal ash dumps and fill

in addition to impoundments. By leaving them out of the rulemaking, we are only solving part of the problem. I am asking for stronger worker protections like dust protection, exposure reduction, and safe transportation of coal ash.

The proposed rules use the Illinois EPA's EJ Start tool to identify environmental justice communities, but that tool leaves out some of the most impacted communities. The final rule should use the US EPA's Environmental Justice Screen to identify environmental justice communities. Only then can we begin to account for cumulative impacts on sensitive or vulnerable populations.

Please also consider ways to engage non-English speaking populations, like offering interpretation at meetings and translation of materials.

IEPA and Pollution Control Board, you have a chance to assure safe drinking water and clean air for my children, your children, and the next generation to come by creating strong coal ash rules.

You must assure that communities are not abandoned by polluters who refuse responsibility for their pollution by blaming each other. Closure and clean-up plans must consider cumulative impacts of pollution on vulnerable communities.

Thank you for working to protect our shared land, air, and water.