

Nya Flowers

Submitted August 2020

Hello my name is Nya Flowers I am a senior at DePauw University studying global health with a minor in biochemistry, and I am currently interning with Faith in Place. **I am here today to express urgent concern** for the health and safety of coal ash pond cleanups, and public access to documents along with having a safe space for the communities' voice in these decisions.

Coal ash is a toxic remnant of burning coal that contains harmful substances, such as arsenic, lead, lithium, and so much more. These chemicals cause cancer, developmental disorders, reproductive problems and so much more. Coal Ash is also very poisonous to our air and contributes to part of the reason why the American Lung Association GAVE Lake County THE GRADE of an F in air quality in 2017.

Closing the plants and holding companies accountable for a proper cleanup of these coal plants is crucial for not only the environmental justice communities but beneficial for Illinois to become a leader in renewable energy efforts. **A proper clean up should ensure:** no wet ash, clear and concise closure standards for coal ash impoundments, cleaning up groundwater that has been polluted from coal ash impoundments, checking that there are no coal ash-contaminated ground wells, and also clean up coal ash fills and dumps.

It is essential for communities to be able to publicly put their input in all plans, programs, and assessments of what is happening in their communities. This starts with companies and elected officials being transparent with their communities, giving access to documents, and a safe space for community members to give their input.