

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
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HOUSE DRH30252-SB-17 (03/25)

Short Title: Amend Coal Ash Management Act of 2014.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representative Harrison.

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO AMEND THE COAL ASH MANAGEMENT ACT OF 2014.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

4  
5 **PART I. PROHIBIT RECOVERY OF COSTS RELATED TO THE MANAGEMENT**  
6 **OF COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUALS AND UNLAWFUL DISCHARGES FROM**  
7 **COAL COMBUSTION RESIDUALS SURFACE IMPOUNDMENTS**

8 SECTION 1. G.S. 62-133.13 reads as rewritten:

9 "**§ 62-133.13. Recovery of costs related to the management of coal combustion residuals**  
10 **and unlawful discharges from coal combustion residuals surface**  
11 **impoundments to the surface waters of the State.**

12 ~~The Commission shall not allow an electric public utility to recover from the retail electric~~  
13 ~~customers of the State costs resulting from an unlawful discharge to the surface waters of the~~  
14 ~~State from a coal combustion residuals surface impoundment, unless the Commission~~  
15 ~~determines the discharge was due to an event of force majeure. For the purposes of this section,~~  
16 ~~"coal combustion residuals surface impoundments" has the same meaning as in~~  
17 ~~G.S. 130A-309.201. For the purposes of this section, "unlawful discharge" means a discharge~~  
18 ~~that results in a violation of State or federal surface water quality standards.~~

19 (a) For the purposes of this section, "coal combustion residuals surface impoundment"  
20 has the same meaning as in G.S. 130A-290. For the purposes of this section, "costs related to  
21 unlawful discharges to the surface waters of the State" include any corrective actions required  
22 of the electric public utility under State or federal law.

23 (b) The Commission shall not allow an electric public utility to recover from the retail  
24 electric customers of the State any of the following costs:

25 (1) Costs incurred on or after January 1, 2014, that are related to the  
26 management of coal combustion residuals disposed of in coal combustion  
27 residuals surface impoundments, including costs associated with complying  
28 with the provisions of Part 2I of Article 9 of Chapter 130A of the General  
29 Statutes.

30 (2) Costs incurred on or after January 1, 2014, that are related to an unlawful  
31 discharge to the surface waters of the State from a coal combustion residuals  
32 surface impoundment, unless the Commission determines the discharge was  
33 due to an event of force majeure."  
34

35 **PART II. PROHIBIT PERMITTED SEEPS**

36 SECTION 2. G.S. 130A-309.212(c) reads as rewritten:



1 "(c) Corrective Action to Prevent Unpermitted Discharges from Coal Combustion  
2 Residuals Surface Impoundments to the Surface Waters of the State. – The owner of a coal  
3 combustion residuals surface impoundment shall implement corrective action to prevent  
4 unpermitted discharges from the coal combustion residuals surface impoundment to the surface  
5 waters of the State as provided in this subsection. The requirements for corrective action to  
6 prevent unpermitted discharges from coal combustion residuals surface impoundments to the  
7 surface waters of the State set out in this subsection are in addition to any other requirements  
8 for corrective action to prevent unpermitted discharges from coal combustion residuals surface  
9 impoundments to the surface waters of the State applicable to the owners of coal combustion  
10 residuals surface impoundments:

- 11 (1) If the Department determines, based on information provided pursuant to  
12 subsection (a) or (b) of this section, that an unpermitted discharge from a  
13 coal combustion residuals surface impoundment, including an unpermitted  
14 discharge from a toe drain outfall, seep, or weep, has reached the surface  
15 waters of the State, the Department shall notify the owner of the  
16 impoundment of its determination.
- 17 (2) No later than 30 days from a notification pursuant to subdivision (1) of this  
18 subsection, the owner of the coal combustion residuals surface impoundment  
19 shall submit a proposed Unpermitted Discharge Corrective Action Plan to  
20 the Department for its review and approval. The proposed Unpermitted  
21 Discharge Corrective Action Plan shall include, at a minimum, all of the  
22 following:
  - 23 a. One of the following methods of proposed corrective action:
    - 24 1. Elimination of the unpermitted discharge.
    - 25 2. Application for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination  
26 System (NPDES) permit amendment pursuant to  
27 G.S. 143-215.1 and Subchapter H of Chapter 2 of Title 15A  
28 of the North Carolina Administrative Code to bring the  
29 unpermitted discharge under permit regulations. This method  
30 of corrective action shall not be available for seeps except as  
31 necessary to implement a Closure Plan pursuant to this  
32 Article.
  - 33 b. A detailed explanation of the reasons for selecting the method of  
34 corrective action.
  - 35 c. Specific plans, including engineering details, to prevent the  
36 unpermitted discharge.
  - 37 d. A schedule for implementation of the Plan.
  - 38 e. A monitoring plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the proposed  
39 corrective action.
  - 40 f. Any other information related to the correction of unpermitted  
41 discharges required by the Department.

42 ...."

### 44 PART III. AMEND COMPLIANCE BOUNDARY PROVISIONS

45 SECTION 3. Subsections (i) and (k) of G.S. 143-215.1 are repealed.

### 47 PART IV. CLOSURE OF PONDS

48 SECTION 4.(a) G.S. 130A-309.214 is repealed.

49 SECTION 4.(b) Part 2I Article 9 of Chapter 130A of the General Statutes is  
50 amended by adding a new section to read:

51 "§ 130A-309.214A. Closure of coal combustion residual surface impoundments.

1       (a) Method of Closure. – All coal combustion residuals surface impoundments shall be  
2 dewatered, and the owner of the impoundment shall remove all coal combustion residuals from  
3 the impoundment, return the former impoundment to a nonerosive and stable condition, and  
4 dispose the coal combustion residuals in a municipal solid waste landfill located on the same  
5 property as the impoundment. Municipal solid waste landfills that receive coal combustion  
6 residuals pursuant to this subsection shall comply with the siting and design requirements for  
7 disposal sites established by Section .0503 of Subchapter B of Chapter 13 of Title 15A of the  
8 North Carolina Administrative Code, except that in lieu of the liner requirement of that section  
9 the landfill shall include a bottom liner system consisting of three components in accordance  
10 with this subsection. Of the required three components of the liner system, the upper two  
11 components shall consist of two separate flexible membrane liners, with a leak detection  
12 system between the two liners. The third component shall consist of a minimum of two feet of  
13 soil underneath the bottom of those liners, with the soil having a maximum permeability of  $1 \times 10^{-7}$   
14 centimeters per second. The flexible membrane liners shall have a minimum thickness of  
15 thirty one-thousandths of an inch (0.030"), except that liners consisting of high-density  
16 polyethylene shall be at least sixty one-thousandths of an inch (0.060") thick. The lower  
17 flexible membrane liner shall be installed in direct and uniform contact with the compacted soil  
18 layer. The Department may approve an alternative to the soil component of the composite liner  
19 system if the Department finds, based on modeling, that the alternative liner system will  
20 provide an equivalent or greater degree of impermeability. The landfill shall otherwise comply  
21 with the construction, closure, and post-closure requirements established by Section .1600 of  
22 Subchapter B of Chapter 13 of Title 15A of the North Carolina Administrative Code and shall  
23 be subject to all applicable requirements of this Chapter and all other applicable rules adopted  
24 thereunder.

25       (b) Schedule of Closure. – Impoundments classified pursuant to G.S. 130A-309.204  
26 shall be closed according to the following schedule:

- 27           (1) High-risk impoundments shall be closed as soon as practicable but no later  
28 than August 1, 2019.
- 29           (2) Intermediate-risk impoundments shall be closed as soon as practicable but  
30 no later than August 1, 2024.
- 31           (3) Low-risk impoundments shall be closed as soon as practicable but no later  
32 than August 1, 2029.

## 33 **PART V. STRUCTURAL FILL/LINER REQUIRED FOR ALL PROJECTS**

34       **SECTION 5.** G.S. 130A-309.220(b) reads as rewritten:

35       "**§ 130A-309.220. Design, construction, and siting requirements for projects using coal**  
36 **combustion products for structural fill.**

37       ...

38       (b) Liners, Leachate Collection System, Cap, and Groundwater Monitoring System  
39 Required for Large Structural Fills. – ~~For projects~~ Projects involving placement of 8,000 or  
40 more tons of coal combustion products per acre or 80,000 or more tons of coal combustion  
41 products in total per project shall have an encapsulation liner system. The encapsulation liner  
42 system shall be constructed on and around the structural fill and shall be designed to efficiently  
43 contain, collect, and remove leachate generated by the coal combustion products, as well as  
44 separate the coal combustion products from any exposure to surrounding environs. At a  
45 minimum, the components of the liner system shall consist of the following:

- 46           (1) A base liner, which shall consist of one of the following designs:
  - 47               a. A composite liner utilizing a compacted clay liner. This composite  
48 liner is one liner that consists of two components: a geomembrane  
49 liner installed above and in direct and uniform contact with a  
50 compacted clay liner with a minimum thickness of 24 inches (0.61  
51

- 1 m) and a permeability of no more than  $1.0 \times 10^{-7}$  centimeters per  
2 second.
- 3 b. A composite liner utilizing a geosynthetic clay liner. This composite  
4 liner is one liner that consists of three components: a geomembrane  
5 liner installed above and in uniform contact with a geosynthetic clay  
6 liner overlying a compacted clay liner with a minimum thickness of  
7 18 inches (0.46 m) and a permeability of no more than  $1.0 \times 10^{-5}$   
8 centimeters per second.
- 9 (2) A leachate collection system, which is constructed directly above the base  
10 liner and shall be designed to effectively collect and remove leachate from  
11 the project. Leachate collected shall be properly discharged to a wastewater  
12 treatment plant.
- 13 (3) A cap system that is designed to minimize infiltration and erosion as  
14 follows:
- 15 a. The cap system shall be designed and constructed to (i) have a  
16 permeability less than or equal to the permeability of any base liner  
17 system or the in situ subsoils underlying the structural fill, or the  
18 permeability specified for the final cover in the effective permit, or a  
19 permeability no greater than  $1 \times 10^{-5}$  centimeters per second,  
20 whichever is less; (ii) minimize infiltration through the closed  
21 structural fill by the use of a low-permeability barrier that contains a  
22 minimum 18 inches of earthen material; and (iii) minimize erosion of  
23 the cap system and protect the low-permeability barrier from root  
24 penetration by use of an erosion layer that contains a minimum of six  
25 inches of earthen material that is capable of sustaining native plant  
26 growth.
- 27 b. The Department may approve an alternative cap system if the owner  
28 or operator can adequately demonstrate (i) the alternative cap system  
29 will achieve an equivalent or greater reduction in infiltration as the  
30 low-permeability barrier specified in sub-subdivision a. of this  
31 subdivision and (ii) the erosion layer will provide equivalent or  
32 improved protection as the erosion layer specified in sub-subdivision  
33 a. of this subdivision.
- 34 (4) A groundwater monitoring system, that shall be approved by the Department  
35 and, at a minimum, consists of all of the following:
- 36 a. A sufficient number of wells, installed at appropriate locations and  
37 depths, to yield groundwater samples from the uppermost aquifer that  
38 represent the quality of groundwater passing the relevant point of  
39 compliance as approved by the Department. A down-gradient  
40 monitoring system shall be installed at the relevant point of  
41 compliance so as to ensure detection of groundwater contamination  
42 in the uppermost aquifer.
- 43 b. A proposed monitoring plan, which shall be certified by a licensed  
44 geologist or professional engineer to be effective in providing early  
45 detection of any release of hazardous constituents from any point in a  
46 structural fill or leachate surface impoundment to the uppermost  
47 aquifer, so as to be protective of public health, safety, and welfare;  
48 the environment; and natural resources.
- 49 c. A groundwater monitoring program, which shall include consistent  
50 sampling and analysis procedures that are designed to ensure  
51 monitoring results that provide an accurate representation of

- 1 groundwater quality at the background and down-gradient wells.  
2 Monitoring shall be conducted through construction and the  
3 post-closure care period. The sampling procedures and frequency  
4 shall be protective of public health, safety, and welfare; the  
5 environment; and natural resources.
- 6 d. A detection monitoring program for all Appendix I constituents. For  
7 purposes of this subdivision, the term "Appendix I" means Appendix  
8 I to 40 C.F.R. Part 258, "Appendix I Constituents for Detection  
9 Monitoring," including subsequent amendments and editions.
- 10 e. An assessment monitoring program and corrective action plan if one  
11 or more of the constituents listed in Appendix I is detected in  
12 exceedance of a groundwater protection standard."  
13

14 **PART VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

15 **SECTION 6.** This act is effective when it becomes law.