

Louisville Residents Sue Over Coal Plant Ash

DYLAN LOVAN, Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A group of Louisville residents who say coal ash from a nearby power plant drifts into their lungs and homes have sued the utility company.

The neighbors are seeking class-action status against LG&E and its Allentown, Pa.-based parent company, PPL Corp., alleging violations of federal environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act.

The residents around the Cane Run Generating Station in western Louisville have complained for years about coal ash blowing from the plant's massive pile of dust.

"Just as individuals cannot dump their household garbage on their neighbors' lawns, electric companies cannot allow their coal dust and coal ash to be blown onto their neighbors' homes and properties," the plaintiffs said in the suit filed Monday.

The neighbors are asking a judge to award them damages to cover cleanup of the ash on residential properties and for the loss of use of their property. They are also seeking civil penalties against the utility for environmental law violations and want the site to be capped and controlled to prevent ash releases.

LG&E spokeswoman Chris Whelan said the company does not comment on pending litigation. She said in an emailed statement that the company "takes its environmental responsibility seriously," and it has spent more than \$1.5 million in dust-mitigation efforts at Cane Run. They include adding cover soil and seeding the pile, using watering trucks and applying dust suppressant and installing dust-filtering systems.

LG&E is planning to stop burning coal at Cane Run in 2015 and build a natural gas-fired generating station at the site.

The ash, a byproduct of burning coal, has been piling up in the last decade, reaching a height of 100 feet and spanning a quarter-mile, according to the suit. Power plants in the U.S. produce about 140 million tons of the ash each year, and there are about 1,000 active coal ash storage sites around the country.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has proposed the ash be regulated as a hazardous material, but no decision has been made more than three years after public hearings were held. The EPA considered more regulation after a 2008 spill at the Tennessee Valley Authority's Kingston plant dumped more than 5 million cubic yards of ash into a river and spoiled hundreds of nearby acreage.

Last year, LG&E erected a wind screen at the site to help stop the wafting of ash into nearby neighborhoods, but residents have complained about its effectiveness.

Louisville Residents Sue Over Coal Plant Ash

Published on Chem.Info (<http://www.chem.info>)

The site has also been fined at least six times since 2011 by the Louisville Air Pollution Control District for violating environmental regulations.

LG&E has "allowed dangerous coal dust and coal ash to regularly escape the Cane Run site and to continually coat its neighbors' homes and lawns with an unsightly and dangerous film of coal dust and coal ash," the suit said.

One of the six named plaintiffs, Kathy Little, has lived near the Cane Run plant since 1979. She said the ash coats her car and home and even gets on the carpet inside.

"It's all over the place," Little said Tuesday.

If class-action status is approved, more residents may join the suit.

Source URL (retrieved on 04/28/2015 - 2:14am):

http://www.chem.info/news/2013/12/louisville-residents-sue-over-coal-plant-ash?cmpid=related_content&qt-recent_content=0