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PRESS STATEMENT

New EPA Rule Targets Leaks at Inactive Coal Ash Landfills

BILLINGS, Mont. – Today, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a revised Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR) rule that no longer exempts inactive impoundments at inactive facilities, also known as “legacy units”. The proposed new rule would address the over half billion tons of coal ash and the decades-old ash ponds that have escaped inspections and leaked toxic chemicals into the drinking and stock water of surrounding communities.

The 2015 CCR Rule, also known as the Coal Ash Rule, set forth national minimum safeguards for existing and new CCR landfills, in addition to new CCR surface impoundments, protecting groundwater and air resources in communities across the country. The initial 2015 rule, however, failed to include legacy units. When the new rule takes effect, operators who profited from burning coal for decades will not be allowed to walk away from their hundreds of inactive landfills and legacy ponds, poisoning drinking water, and leaving the mess for taxpayers to clean up. In addition to making drinking water supplies safe again, ash pond remediation [provides jobs to local workers](#).

In response to the new safeguards, Bob LeResche, Chair of the Western Organization of Resource Councils said,

“Western Organization of Resource Councils and our thousands of members across the western U.S., applaud EPA for taking the long-overdue step to include legacy ponds and inactive landfills in the CCR Rule. From Colstrip to Wyodak to Stanton, our members have experienced firsthand the impacts of unregulated ponds and landfills. We do applaud EPA for taking this step to strengthen the CCR rule, but want to emphasize that the changes will be useless without proper implementation by EPA. We hope that the agency’s oversight and enforcement will greatly improve so that frontline communities throughout the West and the nation that are now dealing with groundwater contamination from legacy ponds can finally return to a more habitable way of life within a healthy community.”

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*The **Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)** is a network of grassroots organizations that span seven of the Western states with more than 18,000 members. Headquartered in Billings, Montana, WORC also has offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C.*

*The **Powder River Basin Resource Council**, founded in 1973, is a family agriculture and conservation organization in Wyoming. Resource Council members are family farmers and ranchers and concerned citizens who are committed to conservation of our unique land, mineral, water, and clean air resources.*