

### *Sends letter signed by 73 Congressmen to EPA*

WASHINGTON—Today, Rep. Mike Quigley (IL-05) released a letter he submitted to the EPA, co-signed by 73 members of Congress, calling on the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate coal ash based on sound science and health risks to people and the environment. Currently, there are no federal regulations for the reuse and storage of coal ash, a mixture of chemicals released after coal burning.

**“Coal ash is a piece of the larger climate crisis, a crisis that has a hefty cost—the cost of carbon,” said Quigley. “We must establish comprehensive, federally enforceable safeguards that protect human health, wildlife, and the environment.”**

According to the EPA, those living in proximity to coal ash dump sites have a one in 50 chance of developing cancer due to arsenic and other toxins released by coal ash. In Illinois, eight locations have been identified as water contaminated and hazardous to human health. Recent incidents in the Tennessee Valley, Mataponi Creek in Maryland and Colstrip, Montana, have also highlighted the dangers of stored coal ash.

In the Tennessee Valley in December of 2008, a dam holding more than 1 billion gallons of toxic coal ash failed, destroying 300 acres of land and dozens of homes, killing fish and other wildlife, and poisoning the Emory and Clinch Rivers. Following the devastating spill, the EPA began a series of public hearings on its plan to regulate coal ash.

In the letter, Quigley explains that when coal ash is stored it must be done in a way that prevents dangerous and toxic chemicals from leaking into habitats and drinking water supplies. The letter also argues for local input involving locations of dump sites and asks for similar safety standards for coal ash that is not stored, but reused in other materials like concrete.

Click [here](#) for a PDF of the full letter.

Coal ash is a mixture of chemicals created when coal is burned. The mixture—also known as fly ash or Coal Combustion Waste (CCW)—includes arsenic and is often dumped into settling ponds. The letter was sent to the EPA on Nov. 19, the last day of public comments regarding the EPA's potential new rule.

In his first term in Congress, Quigley has made environmental protection one of his top priorities. He has commended [green practices of the United States Army](#) , spoke out against the proposed [Keystone XL tar sands pipeline](#) , and petitioned Canadian leaders to [adopt a ban on oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes](#) .

