

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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PRESS RELEASE

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INVESTIGATION POINTS TO STATEWIDE COAL ASH DUMPS SHOULD CLAY MINES BECOME DUMPSITES?

Raleigh- Today the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League revealed the locations of clay mines across North Carolina which could be targeted for coal ash disposal if abandoned clay mine dumping is approved by the state.

The League generated a map showing nearly a hundred active and inactive clay mines located in over twenty counties, extending from Henderson County in the west to Dare County in the east with many in the piedmont.

Duke Energy has chosen clay mines in Lee and Chatham counties for the disposal of millions of tons of coal ash. Therese Vick, investigator for the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, "If these two permits are approved, it will set a terrible precedent." She said that, under the Coal Management Act in 2014, sites could be "deemed permitted" and not subject to regulations for typical solid waste landfills. The Lee and Chatham permits are currently under review by the state.

The investigation carried out by Vick was based the data obtained from the North Carolina Division of Energy, Mines and Land Resources in Raleigh.

Based on these findings, Vick concluded, "This leaves communities across North Carolina vulnerable to the dumping of Duke Energy's toxic coal ash." The permit applications submitted by coal ash service company Charah, Inc. to the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources designate the area for ash to be removed from as "North and South Carolina."

Lou Zeller, Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said that his organization opposes the plan to use clay mines as dumpsites and that better methods are available. Zeller said, "The plan to spread coal ash all over the state is a public health nightmare. It trades a water pollution problem for an air pollution problem." Zeller pointed to the impacts of coal ash dumping on an Alabama landfill, which is the subject of a Civil Rights Act lawsuit, and concluded, "This is an environmental justice issue. Ms. Vick's findings are a warning sign to communities across North Carolina."

A map with details about each clay mine, including location and size, can be viewed at:
<https://www.google.com/maps/@35.7294,-79.173165,8z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!6m1!1szm10H2wCPveA.kIPrXCB9ZKuM>

Founded in 1984, the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League is a non-profit environmental organization with projects and chapters in seven states.

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Therese Vick's Report is attached