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EPA Reaches Settlement with Greenidge Generation LLC on Actions to Address Compliance with Coal Ash Regulations

Settlement Advances EPA's National Enforcement Priority of Protecting Communities from Coal Ash Contamination

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Contact Information

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WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a settlement under the Agency's Coal Ash (Coal Combustion Residuals) program with the Greenidge Generation LLC, an electrical generating plant in Dresden, New York. This settlement, the first under EPA's National Enforcement and Compliance Initiatives <https://epa.gov/enforcement/national-enforcement-and-compliance-initiatives>, commits Greenidge to address groundwater monitoring issues and to ensure the proper closure of a coal ash surface impoundment under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The company will also pay a fine of \$105,000.

Produced primarily from the burning of coal in coal-fired power plants, coal ash, also referred to as Coal Combustion Residuals (CCR), is a large industrial waste stream by volume and can contain harmful levels of contaminants such as mercury, cadmium, arsenic, and cobalt. Prior to 2015, the management and disposal of coal ash was not regulated at the national level; instead, it was regulated to varying degrees, if at all, by some states under various programs. Historic disposal occurred through placement in unlined surface impoundments and landfills. Without proper containment and management, contaminants from coal ash can pollute waterways, groundwater, drinking water, and the air.

“Coal ash contamination wreaks havoc on the environment and drinking water systems, particularly in overburdened communities,” said **David M. Uhlmann, Assistant Administrator for EPA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance**. “EPA is committed to ensuring that coal ash surface impoundments and landfills operate and close in a manner that protects public health and the environment. This settlement is an important step forward in the federal government’s nationwide effort to ensure coal burning plants clean up the harmful effects of the toxic waste they produce.”

“EPA is working to ensure that companies comply with environmental regulations designed to protect public health, our lands and water resources,” said **EPA Region 2 Regional Administrator Lisa F. Garcia**. “This settlement requires Greenidge to cease using, and close, its surface impoundment and to monitor groundwater at the facility to protect surrounding communities and determine whether further steps are required.”

Greenidge burns natural gas to generate electricity for its bitcoin mining operation, and also provides energy to the state’s electricity grid.

EPA alleges that Greenidge did not meet certain requirements under the coal ash program, including:

- Failure to comply with certain groundwater monitoring system requirements.
- Failure to adequately prepare annual groundwater monitoring and corrective action reports.
- Failure to timely prepare initial closure and post closure plans for its coal ash impoundment.

The settlement requires Greenidge to assess groundwater contamination from the coal ash impoundment at its facility. Greenidge will conduct groundwater sampling and analysis, evaluate groundwater flow to determine if additional wells are needed, and update and implement a closure plan for the coal ash impoundment. Ultimately, if groundwater monitoring reveals contamination above the federal groundwater protection standards, Greenidge will be required by self-implementing regulation to design and implement a corrective action program to address the contamination.

To address the risks from disposal and discharge of coal ash, including leaking of contaminants into groundwater, blowing of contaminants into the air as dust, and the catastrophic failure of coal ash surface impoundments, in April 2015, EPA established national rules for coal ash management and disposal. These rules establish a comprehensive set of requirements for the safe handling and disposal of coal ash from coal-fired power plants, which established technical requirements for coal ash landfills and surface impoundments.

EPA is increasing its efforts and working with its state partners to investigate compliance concerns at coal ash facilities around the nation to ensure compliance and protect the health of communities overburdened by pollution such as coal ash residuals.

For more information on coal ash and the Agency's coal ash program activities, please visit EPA's Coal Ash (CCR) website. <<https://epa.gov/coalash>>

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