

March 18, 2010

Cass R. Sunstein, Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Administrator Sunstein,

My family members are 9th generation Appalachians, having settled on 6,000 acres in Meigs County following the Revolutionary War. I'm writing you today because the community I've known my whole life is slowly dying from the enormous amount of fly ash all around us.

My community is the dead center of a toxic donut. There are 4 large coal plants in an 11.5 mile radius, and now they are trying to build more. If they do this, there is no way I could stay here. My farm has been in the family for 7 generations, and I am deeply afraid that I will be forced to abandon it.

One of the dry coal ash landfills, which was supposed to last 27 years, filled up in just 9 years. It is so over the top that the power company just caps it off with grass and keeps piling more ash on. The coal ash blows around our land – collecting on porches, taking paint of cars, and making its way into our pastures, streams, and the Ohio River. When the roads get icy in the winter, they put coal ash down instead of sand. They have lined our kids' running tracks with power plant waste and filled in roads with it along the Ohio River, killing our fish. One plant even tried to begin recycling the ash as agricultural fertilizer. It took an enormous amount of effort to stop this, but there is no reason why it should ever have been proposed. We call it Meigs County grit, and let me tell you, there is grit over everything.

Coal ash contains highly toxic material like mercury, cyanide, and arsenic, yet nobody has tested this sediment to see what 50 years of dumping power plant waste is doing to our land, water, and air. Cancer rates are double what one would expect in a community such as ours. I'm a cancer survivor, and my dog and six of my neighbors died of cancer.

Along with high cancer rates, we also have the highest asthma rate in the state. If I go to sleep with my windows open, I wake up with a migraine. I am concerned with the legacy of what they have left us with, and what the future will mean if we see 4 more plants in our already inundated community. We need regulations around these issues, because our community is dying.

I know that you have a role in what happens with the debate over labeling coal ash as toxic and hazardous, and I ask you to visit my community before you make such an important decision. As taxpayers, we are paying for this no matter what decision you make. We pay your paycheck, and we are already paying with our health and livelihood. The median income around here is about \$14,000, so we don't have the means to hire legal assistance or come meet with you in DC; we will however, be happy to show you around and show you what coal ash is doing to our communities.

Sincerely,

Elisa Young