



## N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Contact: Sarah Young; Bridget Munger  
Phone: 919-707-9033; 919-807-6363

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### State agency drafts permits to better protect water quality near coal ash ponds until closure plans are approved

**RALEIGH** – State environmental officials this week announced an interim step to better protect water quality around several of Duke Energy’s largest coal ash storage facilities.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources is proposing modifications to existing permits for wastewater discharges as part of the permit renewal process for the Allen, Marshall and Riverbend coal ash facilities near Charlotte. DENR has also drafted permits for stormwater discharges at the three plants in response to stormwater permit applications received from Duke Energy.

“Under the Coal Ash Management Act, we will require the elimination of all discharges from every one of Duke Energy’s coal ash ponds in North Carolina,” said Donald van der Vaart, secretary for the agency. “But until the closure plans are formulated and approved, we must pursue this interim step of ensuring that existing discharges, some of which are necessary to ensure the integrity of the dams, do not compromise the water quality in our lakes and rivers.”

The draft permits were developed as part of Governor Pat McCrory’s efforts, starting in the first few months of his administration, to address long-ignored contamination issues at coal ash storage facilities statewide. In the wake of the coal ash spill in February 2014, DENR’s efforts intensified and the agency identified, sampled, catalogued and analyzed all discharges at coal ash storage facilities to determine their cause.

“We worked closely with the EPA to develop these proposed permits to ensure that all discharges, including seeps, are properly monitored and sampled to ensure the protection of water quality,” said Tom Reeder, assistant secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The department is also addressing wastewater and stormwater discharge permits at the other coal ash facilities in North Carolina.

The department has placed the draft permits for the Allen, Riverbend and Marshall plants on its website and is seeking the public’s review and comment on them. To see the draft permits and related documents, go to <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/duke-npdes-permits>.

Printed copies of the draft permits and related documents may be reviewed at the department’s Mooresville Regional Office. To make an appointment to review the documents, please call 704-663-1699.

As part of the public feedback process, the department will hold a public hearing in April to gather input on all six draft permits. The combined public hearing for the wastewater and stormwater permits is scheduled for 6-9 p.m. April 8 at the James Warner Citizen Center in Lincolnton.

Public comments on the stormwater permits should be mailed to: Stormwater Permitting, 1612 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C., 27699-1612. Public comments on the wastewater permits should be mailed to: Wastewater Permitting, 1617 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C., 27699-1617. Public comments may also be submitted via email to: [publiccomments@ncdenr.gov](mailto:publiccomments@ncdenr.gov). For electronic submissions, people are asked to include either “Stormwater” or “Wastewater” in the email’s subject line depending on which type of permit is being addressed. All comments received by May 5 will be considered in the final determination regarding permit issuance and permit provisions.

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