



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

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### **DENR approves emergency response plan to address crack in earthen dam at coal ash impoundment**

**RALEIGH** – State regulators have approved Duke Energy’s emergency plans to start repairing an earthen dam at a coal ash impoundment at the utility’s Cape Fear Steam Electric Station.

The utility reported to the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources Thursday afternoon that a crack had formed in an earthen dam at an ash impoundment at the Cape Fear facility. The impoundment, which was constructed in 1985, holds water mixed with coal ash, which is waste that was generated when the company converted coal into electricity.

DENR approved the utility’s emergency response plan Friday. The plan calls for removing water from a horizontal pipe in the ash impoundment and using a bladder to stop water from exiting the pond through the pipe. Duke Energy also intends to slowly excavate part of the earthen dam where the crack has formed to address concerns that the soil in the dam could strike the nearby vertical pipe and lead to a rupture in the dam. Plans are to move the excavated material to another part of the ash impoundment and then stabilize the excavated portion of the dam with a layer of special fabric and riprap.

The plan directs Duke Energy to contact DENR and start alternative repairs if soil from the dam starts to move into the impoundment toward the vertical spillway pipe before or during the excavation work. The state will require that Duke Energy start working on a long-term repair for the area after the emergency response activities are completed.

Earlier Thursday, before DENR was notified about the crack in the earthen dam, the state agency cited Duke Energy for violating the conditions of a wastewater permit by pumping 61 million gallons of wastewater from the 1985 impoundment and another impoundment on-site that was constructed in 1978. The water was pumped over several months into an on-site canal that leads to a tributary and eventually the Cape Fear River.

The utility has 30 days to respond to the state’s notice of violation.

### **Dan River spill response update**

Duke Energy has identified another large coal ash deposit and has hired a contractor to remove the ash from the river. Earlier, the company identified a coal ash deposit behind the dam at the Danville water treatment intake. The second ash deposit is about one mile downstream from the Eden facility in the Dan River near the confluence of Towns Creek. Plans are to remove both deposits and continue identifying other deposits for removal.

Duke also informed DENR this week that a contractor working on boat ramp repairs in the Dan River struck an abandoned dredge line forcing water in the line to discharge to the river. Duke officials said none of the water contained coal ash residuals and that there several booms, a silt fence and curtains in the river at the boat ramp site. Duke staff calculated that if the entire length of pipe were full of water, the discharge could have been as much as 1,006 gallons. The unauthorized discharge could prompt enforcement action from the state.

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