



N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Release: Immediate

Contact: Susan Massengale; Bridget Munger

Date: Feb. 14, 2014

Phone: 919-810-5996; 919-268-0069

State probing structural integrity of second pipe under Dan River coal ash pond

RALEIGH— The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources has given Duke Energy 10 days to develop a plan and schedule to fix a leaking 36-inch stormwater pipe beneath a coal ash basin in Eden where a separate stormwater pipe broke and caused a spill into the Dan River.

The state agency sent Duke Energy a letter Friday afternoon informing them of this action. DENR detected deficiencies in the 36-inch stormwater pipe after reviewing video taken inside the pipe by Duke Energy.

Also Friday afternoon, DENR began conducting water quality sampling where stormwater enters the pipe and where the pipe discharges into the Dan River.

“We’re concerned about the leaks we see in the 36-inch pipe and want to prevent a second pipe failure,” said Tracy Davis, director of the N.C. Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources. “We’ve asked Duke to provide a schedule for developing a design and implementing that design to repair the pipe.”

DENR officials will make the results of their investigation of the pipe available to the public as soon as it is complete.

Also, the state environmental agency on Friday released tests showing that mercury collected in the Dan River near the site of the coal ash spill meets safe water quality standards.

The state Division of Water Resources started conducting water quality sampling in the Dan River within hours of being notified of the coal ash spill. The recently completed tests were conducted on water samples collected Feb. 6 upstream and downstream of the coal ash spill at the Duke Energy power plant in Eden. The most recent results came from water collected in the Dan River upstream of the spill at N.C. Hwy. 14 and downstream at Draper’s Landing.

“While the most recent test results show mercury levels within safe water quality standards, we continue to be concerned for the long-term health of the Dan River,” said Tom Reeder, director of the N.C. Division of Water Resources. “The area of deepest concern continues to be the deposition of coal ash on the river bottom and its long-term effect on the aquatic environment.”

Also on Friday, DENR sampled the water in the Dan River at a discharge outfall where citizens have expressed concerns about discharges and oddly colored rocks near the failed coal ash basin. The EPA previously investigated the outfall and determined that the accumulation was naturally occurring iron bacteria or iron residue, which left the rocks with an orange color.

Water from the river that has been treated by nearby municipal treatment facilities is safe to drink, downstream municipalities report.

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Jamie Kritzer, Public Information Officer

Phone: (919) 707-8602

<http://www.facebook.com/ncdenr>

1601 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1601

[RSS](#)

Jamie.Kritzer@ncdenr.gov

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