

# Protect Lake Michigan Water!

## Support HB 4358 & SB 3073 to Remove Coal Ash Ponds in Waukegan

NRG/Midwest Generation has announced it is ending coal power production at its Waukegan plant in June 2022. Legislation sponsored by Rep. Rita Mayfield and Sen. Adriane Johnson will require the company to remove all coal combustion residuals (CCR – also known as coal ash) from their Waukegan site.

### What the legislation does:

- Provides that all CCR generated by the electric generating industry located in a municipality bordering Lake Michigan with greater than 75,000 inhabitants but fewer than 150,000 inhabitants shall be removed from the site (only Waukegan meets these requirements).
- Sets up an application, approval and appeals process for CCR removal through the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency.
- Companies currently undergoing the CCR pond closure permitting process would additionally have to follow this new process.

### Why we need it:

- NRG is currently planning on removing the CCR from one pond on the site while capping and leaving the other pond in place. NRG has stated in public hearings that this would not cost less than removing the CCR from both ponds, and is instead focused on completing the process as quickly as possible.
- At a recent public hearing, members of the community, environmental advocacy organizations and local elected officials spoke out overwhelmingly in favor of removing all of the CCR from the site and emptying both ponds.
- The long-term reliability of capping and leaving coal ash ponds in place is unknown, and it is not a gamble worth taking. NRG should take the time to do what is best for the future of Waukegan.
- Lake Michigan provides drinking water for over 6 million Illinoisans, and NRG's own hazard assessment states that the ponds could flow directly into the Lake if either pond fails.
- Waukegan is an Environmental Justice Community that already has 5 EPA Superfund sites within its borders. Waukegan residents cannot afford the costs associated with another environmental disaster caused by a private company not properly cleaning up an industrial site.
- Groundwater testing from 2021 already shows elevated levels of toxic metals cadmium and thallium in the water.

Join the coalition in support of this legislation:

