

Coal Ash Public Hearing - Fact Sheet

SIPC Marion Coal Plant

Public Hearing: Tuesday, June 10th, 10:00 am

Date: Tuesday, June 10th, 2025, 10:00 to 11:00 am

Location: Market Street Hall | 310 North Market Street Marion, IL, 62959

What: Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) owns the Marion coal plant located on the Lake of Egypt in Williamson County. SIPC wants the [Illinois Pollution Control Board \(Board\)](#) to exempt eight of its coal ash ponds from Illinois' coal ash rules. These rules provide for the safe operation and closure of coal ash ponds.

Who: The public (that's you!) is invited to give oral comments before the Board as they consider SIPC's request to exempt their coal ash ponds from Illinois coal ash rules.

SIPC's Petition for Adjusted Standards to Avoid Compliance with Coal Ash Rules

When Illinois' coal ash rules were finalized in 2021, SIPC responded by filing a petition with the Board. SIPC's "petition for adjusted standards" asks the Board to permanently exempt eight coal ashponds at the Marion plant from complying with the rules. Just by filing that petition, SIPC has avoided having to bring those ponds into compliance with the rules. The hearing on June 10 is your chance to tell the Board why it's important to deny SIPC's request.

Additional Background Information:

- Coal ash, also called coal combustion residuals or CCR, is produced primarily from burning coal in coal-fired power plants. Coal ash contains contaminants like mercury, cadmium, and arsenic. Without proper management, these contaminants can pollute waterways, groundwater, drinking water, and the air.
- Illinois adopted coal ash regulations in 2021 that require coal plant owners to retrofit or close their coal ash ponds, monitor their ponds for groundwater contamination, clean up contamination, and ensure the public has a voice in the closure and clean-up process, among other requirements.
- SIPC wants the Board to exempt eight of its coal ash ponds at the Marion coal plant from complying with these regulations. SIPC argues some of these ponds hold only "de minimis" amounts of coal ash, others have already "closed," and none meet the definition of a "CCR surface impoundment" under Illinois law.
- The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) has twice rejected SIPC's arguments and [recommended](#) that the Board deny SIPC's request. IEPA made their recommendations because the ponds are "CCR surface impoundments" holding large amounts of coal ash; none of them have closed; and SIPC's own data show they're contaminating groundwater with toxic pollution, including arsenic, boron, cadmium, and more.

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How to Use Your Voice at the Public Hearing

The public hearing on June 10, from 10-11 a.m., will be the first time the Board hears directly from the community impacted by the SIPC Marion coal plant's pollution. The Board will consider your comments when deciding whether to grant SIPC's request or to deny it. If they deny the request, as IEPA has twice recommended, SIPC will be required to comply with Illinois' coal ash rules for their coal ash ponds at the Marion coal plant.

What to expect at the Public Hearing:

- You will sign in to speak.
- Members of the Board may give a brief introduction, and then the first commenter will be invited to comment.
- **We expect commenters to be given about 3 minutes each.** This will vary depending on the number of people who sign up.
- Members of the Board will be there mostly to listen. Representatives for IEPA and SIPC will be listening as well.

Suggested Information to Include in Your Public Comments:

- Be yourself. Explain why this matters to you.
- Tell the Board that SIPC must comply with the Illinois coal ash rules at the Marion coal plant. The rules must be applied to these eight ponds.
- All eight coal ash ponds meet the definition of a CCR surface impoundment under Illinois law. The IEPA has agreed that the ponds meet this definition.
- As IEPA has explained, the ponds are likely holding a lot of coal ash and have not been closed in accordance with Illinois law.
- Coal ash at the SIPC Marion coal plant is polluting groundwater. SIPC's own monitoring shows that its coal ash ponds are polluting groundwater with antimony, arsenic, beryllium, boron, cadmium, chloride, cobalt, lead, sulfate, thallium, and total dissolved solids.
- The Lake of Egypt is a public water source and is important for recreation and tourism.
- Improper clean-up of the coal ash will limit site redevelopment opportunities.

How to Submit Written Public Comments if You Can't Attend In-Person

Written public comments can be submitted now through a date TBD after the June hearing through email. Follow these simple instructions to submit your written comment:

- Email your written comments to: Don Brown, Clerk of the Board, don.brown@illinois.gov
- Use this Subject line: "Public comment on Case # AS 2021-006"
- Plan to email your written comments by June 24, two weeks post-hearing.