Resolution Requesting the Tennessee Valley Authority Complete a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement to Address Site-Specific Impacts of Transporting and Permanently Disposing of Coal Ash in the City of Memphis

WHEREAS, the Memphis City Council’s highest priority is to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the now and future residents of the city of Memphis; and

WHEREAS, for nearly sixty years, the Allen Fossil Plant (“Allen Plant”) burned coal to generate power - consuming up to 7,200 tons of coal every day, leaving behind over 3.5 million cubic yards of coal combustion residuals, also known as coal ash, that have been stored in leaking, unlined pits near the Allen Plant; and

WHEREAS, in the Spring of 2017, the Tennessee Valley Authority (“TVA”) reported to state regulators extremely high levels of arsenic, fluoride, and lead in the shallow groundwater along the perimeters of one of the leaking, unlined pits at the Allen Plant and due to the high levels of contaminants began preparing to remove the coal ash; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, as part of the removal process, TVA produced the “Allen Fossil Plant Ash Impoundment Closure Environmental Impact Statement” that found transporting of coal ash to an unspecified landfill location and transport of fill material to the Allen Plant would result in significant noise, air quality, traffic, public safety, and community cohesion impacts on unspecified environmental justice communities; and

WHEREAS, because the 2020 Environmental Impact Statement failed to specify the ultimate destination of the coal ash, or transportation method, the report could not properly advise or engage decision makers and residents of the City of Memphis about the specific impacts the removal plan would cause; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, TVA informed the Memphis City Council of plans to relocate the coal ash from the Allen Plant to South Shelby Landfill in South Memphis by truck; since that time, the Memphis City Council has heard from constituents an urging to have TVA conduct a supplement environmental impact statement for the Allen Coal Combustion Residuals mitigation plan so affected communities have the most current, detailed, and informative information now that the final destination and transportation plan for the Allen Coal Combustion Residuals has been identified.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Memphis City Council joins its constituents in requesting TVA produce a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act to provide residents of South Memphis site-specific information about the impacts of TVA’s decision to move coal ash and to provide a meaningful opportunity for the affected community to be heard on how these impacts will affect them.

Sponsor
Jeff Warren, MD
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