



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

Secretary Benjamin H. Grumbles
Maryland Department of the Environment
Montgomery Park Business Center
1800 Washington Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21230

October 4, 2017

Secretary Grumbles:

We, the undersigned members of the Montgomery County Council, write to urge the Maryland Department of Environment to require NRG Energy Inc.'s Dickerson Generating Station and other coal plants in Maryland to adopt the current toxic coal waste standards issued by United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2015.

Coal plants are the No. 1 source of toxic water pollution in the country. The standards in the federal water pollution permit that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) proposes to renew at Dickerson (and two other coal plants in the state) are 35 years old. The EPA investigated the impact of toxic discharges from power plants into waterways for six years, and issued new requirements in 2015 under the Clean Water Act. While President Trump's EPA put a hold on the improved requirements earlier this year, we urge MDE to move forward with implementing them here immediately.

We oppose the full-sale renewal of the Dickerson plant's expired water pollution permit, which allows for excessive dumping of toxic pollutants including arsenic, lead, mercury and selenium into the Potomac River. These currently discharged pollutants can cause severe health and environmental problems in the form of cancer and non-cancerous risks in humans (including heart, nervous system, kidney, liver and stomach problems), lowered IQ among children, and deformities and reproductive harm in fish and wildlife. Many of these pollutants, once in the environment, remain active there for years.

We should take every effort to protect our children and families from avoidable risk. They deserve the common-sense health and environmental protections provided by the use of the best available technologies. There are simple and affordable ways for coal plants to reduce or eliminate their toxic waste, and many coal plants across the country have already done so. Please adopt the toxic coal waste requirements issued by the EPA in 2015.

If there is any additional information we can provide on this or any other issue, please feel free to contact me at (240) 777-7960 or at tom.hucker@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Sincerely,

Tom Hucker
Lead Councilmember, Environment

Roger Berliner
Council President

Hans Riemer
Council Vice President

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Councilmember, At-Large

Sidney Katz
Councilmember, District 3

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