

item #8

Felicia's Testimony

My name is Felicia Wang, and it is reprehensible for this town to not first address the removal of the coal ash on MLK Blvd before moving forward with development plans. As shown by both Hart & Hickman reports and external studies, the site is contaminated by coal ash with numerous toxic metals. Dr. Vengosh's studies find that there is 10 to 30 times higher toxic metal concentration and 2 to 4 times higher radionuclide concentration than baseline soils. These toxins are poisoning your constituents with cancer, asthma, and other serious illnesses.

we just learned that they're still waiting for remediation plans from the state. previously the town has considered Cap & Contain.

Did not seem sure that remediation would be "clearly safe" but what is the remediation plan?

Cap & Contain does not work. We have seen in Mooresville, how even after burying it, the coal ash became exposed in 2018, and then again in 2020 through a sinkhole. In Tennessee, even a playground with synthetic material placed on top to prevent exposure was **unable** to prevent coal ash exposure. In Wisconsin, pavement and buildings on top of a buried coal ash dump spontaneously collapsed on a normal day without abnormal weather. But most importantly, in Chapel Hill, on the very site we are discussing, previously covered coal ash has been exposed. When you refuse to remove or even discuss removing coal ash, you are putting human lives at risk.

Simply capping the site will only perpetuate the risks and require regular maintenance and monitoring. All of this maintenance is prone to human error, and the cost of that error is the health and safety of Chapel Hill community members. Before moving forward, it is critical that the town consider remediation plans to deal with the coal ash with increased community input, consistent monitoring, and transparency, especially on the status of the Brownfield program application. We cannot depend on Brownfield programs, which are designed to be less environmentally rigorous than traditional cleanup programs, to sufficiently address the coal ash dump, but we do need transparency on where we stand and how we plan to move forward. As a relatively wealthy, environmentally conscious, and progressive town, Chapel Hill has the privilege and responsibility to set a precedent for cleaning up coal ash before disastrous development. The difference between actually cleaning up the coal ash and just capping it is the difference between an inconvenience and a death sentence. Any other option that compromises human health and safety should be incomprehensible to the Town Council.

specific

instead of a vague "we're waiting for the state"

town has ability to push for stronger cleanup measures than DEQ and they should.