



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

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Regulate Coal Ash

Formal Title: An Act to regulate coal ash as solid waste.

Rep. Lori Ehrlich

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H1991*

This bill would declare coal ash “solid waste” and regulate it. Coal ash is an abundant and dangerous by-product of coal burning. For decades, hundreds of tons of this waste have been dumped in unlined landfills, pools, and stone quarries.

U.S. coal-fired power plants generate over 130 million tons of toxic coal ash annually, and dispose of the toxic coal ash without any federal regulations. Most of these disposal sites lack adequate safeguards and leave our communities at risk from potential large scale disasters, like the massive coal ash spill in Tennessee two years ago. Communities are also at risk from gradual but dangerous water contamination as coal ash toxins, such as arsenic, selenium, mercury, and cadmium, seep into our drinking water in aquifers.

The public health and environmental hazards from improper coal ash disposal have been known for many years, including increased risk of cancer, learning disabilities, neurological disorders, birth defects, reproductive failure and other sickness. Under intense pressure from the coal industry, however, previous EPA Administrators have failed to protect residents from these hazards, leaving communities across the nation at risk from an inadequate and inconsistent patchwork of state regulatory standards.