



PRESS STATEMENT

James River Association Objects to Draft Permit to Dewater Coal Ash Ponds at Dominion's Brema Power Station

January 12, 2016

On Thursday, January 14, 2016, the James River Association will join the Southern Environmental Law Center (SELC) and citizens from across the watershed to express concerns to the State Water Control Board over terms of a draft permit to dewater coal ash ponds at Dominion's Brema Power Station on the James River. In December, the James River Association and SELC submitted detailed comments to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) outlining how the draft permit fell short in adequately protecting the river, including the species and citizens that rely on it. DEQ responded with a revised permit that takes strides toward being more protective in some areas while not in others.

"The James River deserves the same level of protections as other waters from the toxic pollution contained in coal ash, said Bill Street, CEO for the James River Association. "The permit limits that have been set by DEQ remain as much as fifteen times higher for toxic metals than those proposed for dewatering coal ash ponds in our neighboring state and are not sufficient to protect aquatic life or public health. We strongly urge the State Water Control Board to send the permit back to DEQ to be rewritten with stronger limits that will be protective for both our citizens and wildlife alike," continued Street.

In addition to concerns about pollution limits, the revised permit does not require restrictions on the discharge of coal ash wastewater during low flow conditions when the impacts to the James River will be the greatest, and does not provide for sufficient monitoring terms to ensure that the James River and human health are protected.

Downstream of historic Brema Bluff, river users actively fish, paddle, tube and swim. A state-approved withdrawal permit for a site just downriver exists to provide future drinking water to Louisa County and Fluvanna County residents. The green floater mussel, a state-listed "threatened" mussel species, inhabits these waters and has already suffered damage from Brema's historic and continuing thermal pollution. This species is currently awaiting approval for federal listing and protection due to evidence of its imperiled status.

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ABOUT THE JAMES RIVER ASSOCIATION:

The James River Association is a member-supported nonprofit organization founded in 1976 to serve as

a guardian and voice for the James River. Throughout the James River's 10,000 square-mile watershed, James River Association works through its core programs – Education, Outreach, Watershed Restoration, River Advocacy and the Riverkeeper program – to help people of all ages enjoy, appreciate, and protect the beauty and health of the James River for future generations to enjoy. For more information, visit www.JamesRiverAssociation.org