



PRESS STATEMENT

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

December 15, 2015

Yesterday, the James River Association joined with the Southern Environmental Law Center and citizens from across the watershed to express concerns to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) over the terms of a draft permit to dewater coal ash ponds at Dominion's BreMO Power Station on the James River. The James River Association believes that the draft permit falls short in adequately protecting the river, the species that rely on it and the citizens that live within its watershed from the impacts of coal ash discharges to the river.

The dewatering process is required in order to close the coal ash ponds at BreMO which hold millions of gallons of wastewater. "We are pleased that the process has begun to close these coal ash ponds which DEQ has acknowledged have environmental concerns. However, we must ensure that the process to close the ponds is protective of the river from start to finish," said Shawn Ralston James River Association's Program Director.

"The permit limits that have been set by DEQ are far higher than those proposed for dewatering coal ash ponds in our neighboring state and are not sufficient to protect aquatic life or public health," said Pat Calvert, James River Association's Upper James Riverkeeper. "The James River is a vital asset to our communities, and we believe it deserves at least the same level of protections as other waterways. We strongly urge DEQ to issue a final permit that includes stronger limits to ensure that the James River will be safe and healthy for both our citizens and wildlife alike," Calvert continued.

While there are many concerns with the draft permit, among the largest are that the permit does not place limits on the volume of wastewater and the amount of toxic chemicals within it that are discharged to the James and allows for a mixing zone for the wastewater that extends up to 11 miles downstream. Additionally, endangered species were not considered when drafting the permit, and in the vicinity of the proposed discharge, there are three species of mussels currently being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

The James River Association, in partnership with the Southern Environmental Law Center, submitted formal comments to DEQ which are also posted on the James River Association website www.JamesRiverAssociation.org.

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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, the James River Association works through core programs – Education, Community Conservation, 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 on the James River Association visit www.JamesRiverAssociation.org.