Statements/Responses Issued by HQ and Regions to Media on N.C. and W. Va. Spills -- 2/26/14

North Carolina Spill

By HQ

- To Edward Martin of Business North Carolina

Q: I've found numerous references to an accident in Kingston, Tenn., being the largest, and this one being the third-largest, but cannot determine the second largest. Could you help, please? Perhaps with a list?

RESPONSE: Until we receive the final estimates, EPA cannot say where the Dan River Duke spill ranks in comparison to previous spills.

In EPA's 2010 coal combustion residuals regulatory proposal, EPA cited 4 cases of structural failures:
TVA /Kingston – 5.4 million cubic yards of fly ash sludge released
Martins Creek Power Plant – 100 million gallons of coal ash and contaminated water released
Georgia Power/Plant Bowen – 2.2 million gallons of ash/water mixture released
TVA Widows Creek, Stevenson AL – 5,000 cubic yards of flue gas desulfurization material released

In addition, in 1967 AEP's Clinch River Power Plant is reported to have released 130 million gallons of coal ash slurry into Dumps Creek, according to SourceWatch (could not be confirmed by the owner).

- To Jonathan Katz of Al Jazeera America

Q: Has there been any progress on the cleanup or dredging? Was also hoping that someone could help walk me through the specifics of this kind of spill: the risks involved and how they'd be optimally addressed. And finally, if there's any perspective on current federal coal ash regulations and the prospects for more down the road.

RESPONSE:
Re: the spill:
Current Status:
Plugging pipes:

There continues to be no active coal ash release into the river.

Duke Energy is currently implementing plans to plug the entire length of the 48" collapsed pipe. A 40-foot grout plug was also installed on the 36” pipe on Feb. 21, and the entire length of this pipe will be grouted.

Coal ash removal:
Duke has begun removal operations to address the material located at the outfall of the stormwater management drain as it empties into the Dan River. Duke has installed a filter skirt around an ash pile and will remove the material from the shoreline by a vacuum truck.

Inclement weather and resulting high river levels have temporarily halted the ash removal. However, removal is expected to resume next week once river levels drop.

Sampling:
Water quality sampling is being conducted by Duke Energy, NC DENR, VDEQ and EPA. Sampling locations include the spill source, several downstream locations, and potable water intakes at the Danville, South Boston and Clarksville, Va., water treatment plants (WTPs).

EPA’s drinking water samples have shown no impacts to the local drinking water, but we continue to monitor and assess the situation. EPA also continues to perform comprehensive sampling and assessment of river sediments, surface water and drinking water to support the response. You can find EPA sampling results here: http://epa.gov/region4/duke-energy/index.html

Duke, NCDENR and VDEQ sampling results can be found at www.duke-energy.com/Dan-River/, http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/dan-river-spill and http://deq.virginia.gov/ConnectWithDEQ/EnvironmentalInformation/NorthCarolinaCoalAshSpill.aspx.

History:
On Feb. 3, 2014, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NC DENR) contacted EPA requesting technical

assistance for the coal ash release that occurred at the Duke Energy Dan River Steam Station coal ash pond in Rockingham County, N.C. The release happened when a 48" stormwater pipe underneath a coal ash pond collapsed, allowing the coal ash to enter the Dan River. Approximately 39,000 tons of coal ash entered the river, according to estimates by Duke Energy.

On Feb. 4, EPA Regions 3 and 4 deployed On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) and entered into a Unified Command structure, consisting of Duke Energy, NC DENR, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ), to manage the incident. As a part of the Unified Command, EPA is providing technical assistance, including oversight, data management and sampling support.

On Feb. 7, Duke was able to stop the release of coal ash into the Dan River from the 48" collapsed pipe.

The Unified Command held community briefings in Danville, Va. on Feb. 11, Eden, N.C. on Feb. 19, and South Boston, Va. on Feb. 20, to provide information to the public regarding roles and responsibilities during the response, and allotted the majority of the time for Q&As. Additional community briefings will be held in North Carolina and Virginia as restoration activities progress.

On Feb. 18, NC DENR ordered Duke Energy to immediately halt unauthorized discharges of water from a second 36" concrete stormwater pipe beneath the coal ash basin. The water contained elevated levels of arsenic. The discharge is being contained and the water is being pumped to the coal ash basin until the 36" pipe can be plugged.

Re: the coal ash proposal:
In 2010, EPA proposed the first-ever national rules to ensure the safe disposal and management of coal ash from coal-fired power plants under the nation's primary law for regulating solid waste, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). These rules would ensure stronger oversight of the structural integrity of impoundments in order to prevent future accidents. EPA is

committed to finalizing the proposed coal ash rule by December 19, 2014.

By Region 4
- To John Downey of Charlotte Business Journal
Q: A third storm water outfall to the Dan River, up-river from the release locations was sampled and the preliminary results have been received. Are these results final and on the web?
RESPONSE: EPA expects to have test results available soon and will post them at http://epa.gov/region4/duke-energy/index.html

West Virginia Spill

By Region 3
- To Ken Ward of Charleston Gazette
Q: Why is EPA holding "community briefings" in North Carolina related to the coal-ash spill, but never held similar briefings in WV related to the chemical spill on the Elk River.
RESPONSE: EPA has a different role in each of these two responses. In the West Virginia response, EPA is providing technical assistance to the State of West Virginia and the State has not requested that EPA participate in community briefings. In the North Carolina response, the State of North Carolina, the State of Virginia, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Duke Energy and EPA are operating in a Unified Command structure. The Unified Command agreed to do community briefings. EPA participated in community briefings with other members of the Unified Command.