

CONTROVERSIAL FAULKNER COAL ASH DUMP CLOSURE ANNOUNCEMENT EXPECTED TODAY

Mirant Reportedly Plans to Announce Closure at Charles County Planning Board Meeting; Long Critical of Site, Environmental Integrity Project and Potomac Riverkeeper Waiting for Details of Mirant Clean-up Plan.

WASHINGTON, D.C.///March 9, 2010///Environmental groups are eagerly awaiting details of Mirant's plans to clean up a coal ash dump near LaPlata in Charles County that is the focus of an ongoing state enforcement action over illegal discharges of toxic pollutants into Zekiah Swamp, a key part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Coal ash contains heavy metals and other pollution that is toxic to human health and the environment.

Mirant MD Ash Management, LLC reportedly plans to withdraw its application for a special exception permit because it plans to close the controversial coal ash dump. Mirant is expected to announce the closure plans for the Faulkner dump today during a meeting of the Charles County Board of Appeals. Though the closure plans have not yet been officially confirmed, they are being welcomed by the Environmental Integrity Project and Potomac Riverkeeper, who sent a notice of intent to sue letter to the company on April 3, 2008.

Jennifer Peterson, attorney, Environmental Integrity Project, said: **“We’re encouraged to hear Mirant is expected to do the right thing and close the Faulkner coal ash dump. But closure is only half the battle, since this pollution will not just disappear when the dumping stops. We hope that Mirant will share their schedule for clean up at tonight’s meeting—the sooner the better.”**

According to the notice of intent to sue filed on April 3, 2008 by the Environmental Integrity Project, Potomac Riverkeeper, and local citizens, the Mirant Faulkner coal ash dump is discharging selenium, cadmium, and other toxic pollutants into the Zekiah Swamp in violation of the Clean Water Act.

Zekiah Swamp, the largest hardwood swamp in Maryland, has been described by the Smithsonian Institution as “one of the most important ecological areas on the East Coast.”

Ed Merrifield, Potomac Riverkeeper, said: **“We are eager to hear Mirant’s plans and timetable for clean up of the Faulkner site. The toxic pollution leaching from the seven million cubic yards of fly ash already in the landfill will continue to impact Zekiah Swamp and downstream waters even if dumping stops today.”**

After the Environmental Integrity Project and Potomac Riverkeeper sent the notice of intent to sue letter, the Maryland Attorney General filed a complaint in the Circuit Court for Charles County for violations of state and federal laws on May 30, 2008. In addition to civil penalties, the complaint seeks to prevent further disposal of fly ash at the site until the facility cleans up the existing contamination caused by unsafe dumping of coal ash.

The Charles County Board of Appeals meeting will take place at 7:00 pm at 200 Baltimore Street in La Plata, Maryland.

ABOUT THE GROUPS

The Environmental Integrity Project (<http://www.environmentalintegrity.org>) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization established in March of 2002 by former EPA enforcement attorneys to advocate for effective enforcement of environmental laws. EIP has three goals: 1) to provide objective analyses of how the failure to enforce or implement environmental laws increases pollution and affects public health; 2) to hold federal and state agencies, as well as individual corporations, accountable for failing to enforce or comply with environmental laws; and 3) to help local communities obtain the protection of environmental laws.

Potomac Riverkeeper, Inc. (<http://www.potomacriverkeeper.org>) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization whose mission is to protect and restore water quality in the Potomac River and its tributaries through community action and enforcement. It is a membership, grassroots organization that is an advocate for the health of our rivers and streams and those who use them.

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