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Hello, my name is Haley Schulz. I am Community Organizer with Public Citizen, but most importantly, I come to you today as a concerned citizen, a mother, a daughter, a wife, and a community leader who was born, raised, and lives in Fort Bend County, Texas. I am firmly opposing the EPA's proposal to delay compliance deadlines for coal ash cleanup at legacy sites, including those covered under the 2024 CCR Rule.

I live in Fort Bend County, where we have the largest coal plant in the state of Texas. W.A. Parish is not only the largest in Texas, but it's one of the most polluting and most deadly coal plants in the country. And that's just considering the air emissions. But when you learn they have an unlined 80-acre coal ash pit that actively leaches into our ground water and soil, it's no surprise when you also learn cancer is the second leading cause of death in our county. There are 66 groundwater monitoring wells near W.A. Parish and every single one has shown exceedances in federal advisory levels (that's the EPA's own standards) for compounds like boron, chloride, sulfate, total dissolved solids, and those four had exceedances literally as recent as last September. Arsenic, chromium, and lithium show exceedance data as recently as 2021, antimony in 2019, it goes on and on. I have seen the impacts of these compounds in our groundwater and soil firsthand. These toxic metals are known carcinogens that are directly linked to cancer, pulmonary, cardiovascular, and neurological damage.

Fort Bend County is one of the most beautifully diverse counties in the country and we're set to double in size by 2050. We are a minority-majority county and in rural Fort Bend where W.A. Parish is located, the EPA designated the surrounding community as an EJ community, knowing and acknowledging the disproportionate impacts laid on the community. In Thompsons, where W.A. Parish is physically located, folks there don't drink their well water, which the city is 100% sourced by well water, because they know it's bad. Cancer is prevalent in rural Fort Bend and we know why. Despite these truths, developers are snatching up property within a couple miles of W.A. Parish, claiming it's a rural goldmine and want to sell million-dollar homes. And while thousands of new homes are being built, new residents are unknowingly putting their families in extreme danger. But the coal ash from this plant don't just impact my community, but are exposed to the Brazos River Basin, the second largest river basin in Texas,

When W.A. Parish closes (because inevitably this almost-70 year old plant will close), I need to know that my community will be protected and watched over by this Agency that swore to do just that. Delaying the compliance with the Legacy CCR rule is not only obstructive, it's negligent. The people deserve transparency and accountability from known polluters. Delaying the enforcement of this rule not only sends a message to the public that we don't matter, but it's actually doing more harm than good for industry themselves. The cost of reparations and compliance is only going to increase year-over-year. With the current administration fighting so hard to bring back coal, the public is more at risk of CCR impacts.

Delaying compliance will compound the issue that will cost Americans billions of dollars every year and that's just in the cost of running a coal-fired power plant. But think of the billions of dollars it will cost to fix unchecked, unlined coal ash pits across the country that have the



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potential of turning into superfund sites. Utilities and power plant owners have had years to comply with the Rule and it makes no sense to continue kicking the can down the road. The data is irrefutable – coal ash and CCR are harmful enough to cause death with direct causation – this has been known for years. You are planting seeds your agency will have to reap in the very near future, so I am asking you hold all parties accountable and hold the line by enforcing compliance. Thank you for your time and consideration.