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March 26, 2019

Mr. William D. Johnson
Outgoing President and
Chief Executive Officer
Tennessee Valley Authority
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Mr. Jeffrey Lyash
Incoming President and
Chief Executive Officer
Tennessee Valley Authority
400 West Summit Hill Drive
Knoxville, TN 37902

Dear President Johnson and Mr. Lyash,

While I appreciate your taking the time to meet with me and the other members of the Tennessee congressional delegation on Wednesday, March 13, 2019, I remain increasingly concerned with the timeline and lack of urgency among leaders at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in regard to the clean-up of the coal ash at the Allen Fossil Plant.

As reported both locally and nationally, elevated levels of arsenic and other contaminants are moving through the ground threatening the drinking water in Shelby County.¹ I am aware that TVA plans to remove the arsenic and other coal ash contaminants found in the groundwater at the Allen Fossil Plant, but I believe time is of the essence as more information is assembled about conditions at the site. To that end, I am requesting that TVA expedite the process to

- Remove the existing coal ash and restore the land to a usable condition; and
- Monitor the site, known contaminants, and adjacent eco-systems especially the Memphis Sand Aquifer.

While it was my understanding that corrective work will begin this year, I was alarmed to learn at the meeting that clean-up could take as long as 20 years. TVA has known about the extremely high levels of coal ash contaminants since at least November 2016, when it began taking groundwater samples.² Despite its knowledge, TVA did not disclose the contamination to the

¹ Environmental Integrity Project, "Coal's Poisonous Legacy: Groundwater Contaminated by Coal Ash Across the U.S.," <https://www.environmentalintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/National-Coal-Ash-Report-3.4.19-1.pdf>

² Stantec Consulting Services Inc., "2017 Annual Groundwater Monitoring and Corrective Action Report," Tennessee Valley Authority Allen Fossil Plan East Ash Disposal Area CCR Unit, [https://ccr.tva.gov/Plants/ALF/Surface%20Impoundment%20-](https://ccr.tva.gov/Plants/ALF/Surface%20Impoundment%20)

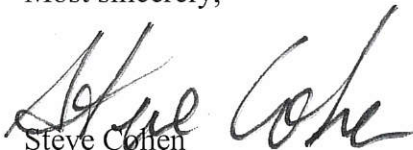
public until July 2017.³ By the time corrective action begins, it will have taken almost four years since TVA's groundwater monitoring revealed the pollution to begin appropriate corrective action and much longer to complete the clean-up.

Although TVA has proposed to treat some of the contaminated groundwater in the interim period, the utility cannot meaningfully clean up the Allen site and protect Memphis's clean water without addressing the coal ash as the source of pollution. TVA's timeline to address its coal ash—the primary source of pollution at Allen—is unacceptable.

It has been over a decade since the catastrophic Kingston coal ash disaster. It is my hope that the leadership at TVA will fulfill its duty and mission to correct what it has created and, with all urgency, show to the rest of the nation how a responsible agency responds when dangerous problems arise. The citizens of Memphis and Shelby County deserve nothing less than full commitment in this matter.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

[%20East%20Ash%20Disposal%20Area/Groundwater%20Monitoring/Annual%20Groundwater%20Report/257-90\(e\)_Annual%20Groundwater%20Monitoring%20Report_ALF_East%20Ash%20Disposal%20Area.pdf](#)

³ "Toxins in water under Tennessee power plant causing alarm," *Associated Press*, <https://apnews.com/b1e4fc71f4b44a18ab55284d39d7b257>