



July 15, 2019

COAL ASH – Frequently Asked Questions

Is there any indication that coal ash or its components have moved into the groundwater outside the landfill?

No. The JED Landfill has multiple systems to contain and control the waste and resulting liquids. In addition, the drinking water aquifer in this area is well below the Landfill and is separated from it by a natural confining unit that is around 100 feet thick.

Does ground water flow from beneath the JED Landfill toward the Harmony Area?

No. The TOHO drinking wells for Harmony are over 500 feet deep and are sealed off down to 305 feet. The wells are only open to the Floridan aquifer system which begins in the area at about 300 feet below sea level. This drinking water aquifer flows from the west to the east in area of the JED Landfill. The drinking water aquifer is below a 100 foot thick confining unit and is over 300 feet beneath the landfill lining—and flows away from the Harmony community.

Is the JED facility different from the other facilities that accept coal ash?

Yes. The JED facility has a double liner with a clay layer placed beneath it. Liners protect the environment around and under a landfill. They collect the liquid that dissipates from the debris in the landfill. That liquid (leachate) is collected and treated to remove harmful chemicals or compounds. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Landfill permit requires more than 50 monitoring wells to be sampled for the JED Landfill. Samples are collected, tested, and the results sent to FDEP twice a year for review.

What has the Osceola County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) done since residents expressed concerns about the coal ash?

On April 1, 2019 the Board voted to amend the contract with Waste Connections of Osceola, LLC to allow the JED Landfill to receive coal ash from Puerto Rico. The County contract with the Landfill owners required the Board to be notified if material from outside Florida was going to the Landfill. Had this material come from anywhere within Florida, the matter would not have gone before the Board. In response to resident concerns, the Board asked the JED Landfill owners to cease importing coal ash; they agreed to do that by October 1, 2019. The original agreement called for coal ash to be accepted through December 2019. There are legally binding contracts involved, so the Board cannot just order a “stop”. The BCC has also retained environmental experts to review the JED Landfill operations and provide advice on available methods to make sure the drinking water aquifer stays protected. These experts are reviewing the JED Landfill operations reports, groundwater well monitoring data, FDEP inspection reports and evaluating the potential for additional safeguards and will report back to the BCC frequently.

Has coal ash been designated a hazardous waste product?

No. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection classifies coal ash as a non-toxic material. It contains trace quantities of metals, but so does soil. The JED Landfill is a Class 1 facility specifically permitted in 2004 to receive many waste products including coal ash. The JED Landfill is currently in compliance with all of the rules and regulations that Florida has in place.

Does the dust from the coal ash pose an air quality hazard for residents?

No. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection allows coal ash to be used as a cover at the Landfill. However, the coal ash at JED Landfill is not used as cover. It is placed in a separate section of the Landfill and sealed. There is no indication that coal ash dust has left the Landfill property.