



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 29, 2021

**CONTACT:** M. Lynn Battle, Chief  
Office of External Affairs  
MLB@adem.alabama.gov  
(334) 462-6728

## **ADEM to Hold Public Hearing on Barry Plant's Coal Ash Permit** *Hearing in Saraland to Allow Public to Comment About Containment Closure Plan*

**MONTGOMERY, Ala.** – The Alabama Department of Environmental Management will hold a public hearing Tuesday, March 30, on a draft permit for Alabama Power's plan to close the coal combustion residuals (CCR) containment, or coal ash pond, at its Barry Electric Generating Plant in Mobile County.

Tuesday's hearing will be at 6 p.m. at the Hampton Inn and Suites, at 80 Shell St., Saraland.

ADEM Director Lance LeFleur pointed out that the department does not dictate to the power company which method of closing the coal ash to use – capping in place or excavating the coal ash and transporting it to a landfill. "Federal and state rules leave that decision to the utility, and Alabama Power has chosen to cap in place," LeFleur said. "ADEM's role is to ensure those plans meet federal and state standards and provide the safeguards necessary to prevent spills and protect waterways and groundwater. The decision on whether to grant the permit will be driven by the data.

"We certainly welcome comments from the public, particularly as they relate to details of the plan. That's why we've extended the comment period to seven days past the public hearing. We will evaluate all the comments and address all pertinent points."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, special social distancing requirements will be in place. All attendees will be required to wear masks and will be subject to temperature screening prior to entering the hearing location. Space inside the hearing room will be restricted, and each speaker will be assigned a time slot.

ADEM encouraged preregistration for those who wish to speak. The preregistration period ended March 23; however, speakers can also register Tuesday on site. Those who preregistered will be called to speak first.

Because of strong public interest and the number of speakers who signed up, ADEM will hold two simultaneous sessions. Recordings of the sessions will be posted online with links on ADEM's website within 24 hours.

“We are holding two sessions to make sure everyone who signs up to speak gets an opportunity to speak,” LeFleur said. “This should cut the wait time in half. Every speaker will be treated the same regardless of which session he or she is assigned.”

In addition to speaking at the hearings, the public can also mail or email comments directly to ADEM. The comment period for the Barry Plant’s CCR permit ends April 6 at 5 p.m. All comments will be considered in the decision on whether to issue the permit, and ADEM will provide a response to each issue raised.

Those who make oral comments at the public hearing are also encouraged to submit those comments in writing. In order to affect final decisions, comments must offer technically substantial information that is applicable to the proposed permit.

For more information about the CCR hearings, including how to submit comments, go online to <http://adem.alabama.gov/moreInfo/ccrinfo.cnt>.

###