

PPL Corporation Temporarily Shuts Down Two Coal-Fired Generating Units at Martins Creek Plant

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PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL) will shut down the two coal-fired generating units at the company's Martins Creek power plant Thursday (9/8) and has stopped all flow of water into the temporary fly ash basin at the plant to evaluate the basin's integrity.

During a regular inspection of the earthen dike at one end of the basin, plant employees observed a small amount of water that appeared to be seeping from the base of the dike.

The clear standing water, no more than one inch deep in an area about 50 yards long, can be seen at the base of the dike, said Dennis Murphy, PPL's vice president and chief operating officer of Eastern Fossil & Hydro Operations. "This is an amount of water that would be measured in gallons, not hundreds of gallons," he said.

Within several hours of cutting off the flow to the basin, the water began to recede. The water is contained in a ditch, will be monitored by plant employees around the clock, and did not reach the Delaware River, Murphy said.

"We've been inspecting this basin daily since we began using it for temporary fly ash disposal," he said. "As soon as we observed this condition, we took immediate action to stop using the basin until we can investigate."

"We need to perform a thorough evaluation. The right decision is to stop putting ash and water into the basin while we do that," Murphy said. He noted that ash flow from the coal units to the basin was stopped immediately. Ash produced in the units is being stored inside the generating units while an orderly shutdown is completed.

Some ash cleanup activities have been suspended, but others continue. "Because we can't pump water into the basin, we can't do the pumping portion of the cleanup we have been doing at the river," Murphy said.

Other cleanup, including an expanded cleanup of areas closer to the middle of the river, is not expected to be affected in the short term, Murphy said. He said PPL is evaluating its options for disposal of ash being cleaned up.

Murphy said there are no plans to restart the coal-fired units until PPL is satisfied that the company has an adequate disposal facility for fly ash.

PPL has notified the DEP about the seepage and its actions to stop using the basin until the evaluation is complete.

Regarding the plant's main ash basin, PPL has repaired the damage that caused the leak two weeks ago. The basin will include several additional permanent barriers to prevent a leak in the future, including new concrete and steel "stoplogs," a reinforced steel plate and two new valves.

PPL is working with the Pennsylvania DEP to restart the basin as soon as possible.

"It's in everyone's best interest to resume use of the main basin," said Murphy. "With the new barriers, that's the best location for disposing of fly ash at the Martins Creek plant."

One of the wooden components of the main ash basin's discharge structure failed on Aug. 23, allowing an estimated 100 million gallons of water and ash to flow out of the basin into the Delaware River and onto fields and roadways around the plant.

PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL), headquartered in Allentown, Pa., controls about 12,000 megawatts of generating

capacity in the United States, sells energy in key U.S. markets and delivers electricity to nearly 5 million customers in Pennsylvania, the United Kingdom and Latin America. More information is available at <http://www.pplweb.com/>.

SOURCE: PPL Corporation

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