

Groundwater Contamination at Wyoming Plants

Selenium, arsenic, lithium and more were detected at multiple coal-fired power plants in Wyoming.

In Wyoming, three PacifiCorp coal-fired [power plants](#) reported [contamination](#) of [groundwater](#) above state or federal limits. This includes the Dave Johnston, Jim Bridger and Naughton plants.

According to the [Wyoming Public Media](#), PacifiCorp reported detecting [selenium](#), [arsenic](#), [lithium](#) and more polluting elements. A report from Earthjustice, a non-profit environmental law firm, drew attention to the information. The report highlights 67 plants across 22 states with the same problem.

The culprit is [coal ash](#) facilities at the plants, according to the [Wyoming Public Media](#). According to Spencer Hall, a spokesman for Rocky Mountain Power, an operating entity of PacifiCorp, contaminants in the Wyoming groundwater is not as bad as in other states.

"They're self-contained. They don't have the access to the groundwater that is gonna enter into the aquifers and things that exist in other geographical parts of the country. Like, the geography of where our coal ash piles are is kind of ideal as far as containment," Hall said to the [Wyoming Public Media](#).

According to Hall, that is important because contamination has not gotten into surface or drinking water at all through the contamination. A [remediation](#) plan will be announced in early 2019, according to [Wyoming Public Media](#).

"We'll be working with the state, what that looks like. And then in the community meetings, we'll be announcing it. And we'll be taking public input too," Hall said to Wyoming Public Media. Hall is expecting public input to

guide the plan as well.

Hall said PacifiCorp is fully in compliance with the Obama-era coal ash rule, which requires detecting and reporting contaminants, then implementing remediation. According to the [Wyoming Public Media](#), the Trump Administration finalized modifications to the rule this past summer which environmental groups argues weakens it. Those environmental groups filed a petition for a review in federal court in October 2018.