



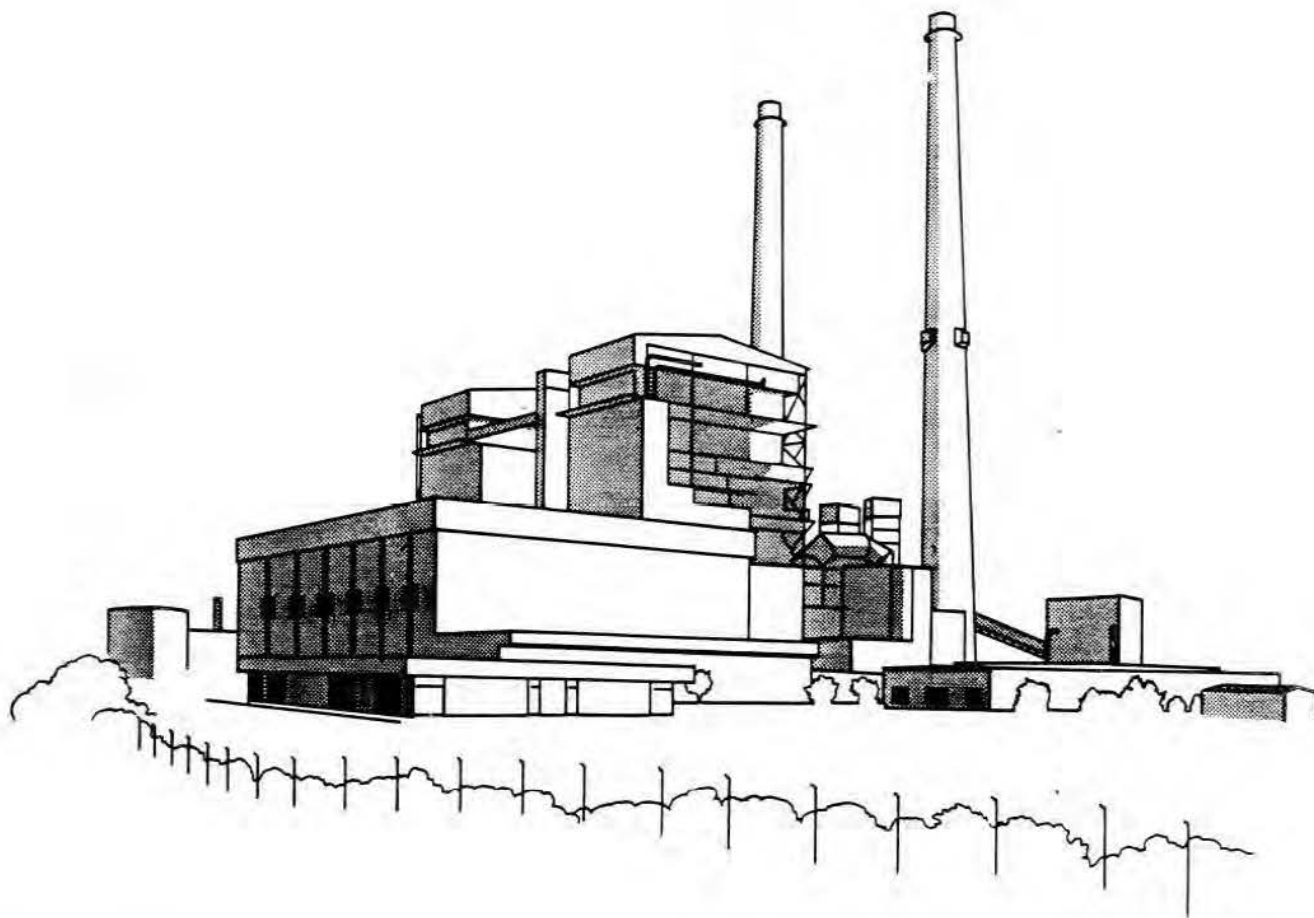
Solid Waste

# Report to Congress

I/A

Hart Exhibit 21  
Part 1 of 2  
Docket No. E-2, Sub 1219

## Wastes from the Combustion of Coal by Electric Utility Power Plants



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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 8 1988

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable George Bush  
President of the Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President:

I am pleased to transmit the Report to Congress on Wastes from the Combustion of Coal by Electric Utility Power Plants. The report presents the results of studies carried out pursuant to Section 8002(n) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 as amended (42 U.S.C. Section 6982(n)).

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the management of solid wastes generated by the combustion of coal from electric utility power plants. These wastes account for approximately 90 percent of all wastes generated from the combustion of fossil fuels. The principal waste categories covered include fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag and flue gas emission control waste.

The report and appendices are transmitted in two separate volumes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lee M. Thomas", is written below the word "Sincerely,".

Lee M. Thomas

Enclosure







UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 8 1988

THE ADMINISTRATOR

Honorable James C. Wright  
Speaker of the House  
of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

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Lee M. Thomas

Enclosure



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY . . . . .   | ES-1 |
| I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .   | 1-1  |
| 1.1 Legislative History. . . . .  | 1-1  |
| 1.2 Scope and Sources. . . . .  | 1-7  |
| 1.3 Organization . . . . .  | 1-9  |
| II. OVERVIEW OF THE ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY . . . . .                                   | 2-1  |
| 2.1 The Demand for Electricity . . . . .  | 2-1  |
| 2.1.1 Structure of the U.S. Electric<br>Utility Industry . . . . .                        | 2-7  |
| 2.1.2 Economic and Environmental Regulation<br>of the Electric Utility Industry . . . . . | 2-11 |
| 2.2 Importance of Coal to Electric Utilities . . . . .                                    | 2-14 |
| 2.3 Overview of Coal-Fired Power Plants . . . . .   | 2-18 |
| 2.3.1 Regional Characteristics of Coal-Fired<br>Electric Generating Plants . . . . .      | 2-18 |
| 2.3.2 Electricity Generating Technologies . . . . .                                       | 2-21 |
| 2.4 Coal Constituents and By-Products . . . . .   | 2-29 |
| III. WASTES GENERATED FROM COAL-FIRED ELECTRIC UTILITY<br>POWER PLANTS . . . . .          | 3-1  |
| 3.1 Overview of Electric Utility Wastes . . . . .   | 3-1  |
| 3.2 High-Volume Wastes . . . . .  | 3-3  |
| 3.2.1 Ash . . . . .   | 3-3  |
| 3.2.2 FGD Sludge . . . . .  | 3-21 |
| 3.3 Low-Volume Wastes . . . . .   | 3-41 |
| 3.3.1 Boiler Blowdown . . . . .   | 3-43 |
| 3.3.2 Coal Pile Runoff . . . . .  | 3-45 |
| 3.3.3 Cooling Tower Blowdown. . . . .   | 3-47 |
| 3.3.4 Demineralizer Regenerant and Rinses . . . . .                                       | 3-50 |
| 3.3.5 Metal and Boiler Cleaning Wastes . . . . .  | 3-52 |
| 3.3.6 Pyrites . . . . .   | 3-57 |
| 3.3.7 Sump Effluents . . . . .  | 3-60 |
| 3.4 Summary . . . . .   | 3-62 |
| IV. COAL COMBUSTION WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES . . . . .                                  | 4-1  |
| 4.1 State Regulation of Coal Combustion<br>Waste Disposal . . . . .                       | 4-1  |
| 4.1.1 State Classification of Coal Combustion<br>Wastes . . . . .                         | 4-2  |

# TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont'd)

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| 4.1.2 Requirements for Coal Combustion Waste Disposal . . . . .                                       | 4-6  |
| 4.1.3 Summary . . . . .   | 4-9  |
| 4.2 Available Waste Management Methods and Current Practices . . . . .                                | 4-10 |
| 4.2.1 Land Management of Coal Combustion Wastes . . . . .   | 4-10 |
| 4.2.2 Alternative Waste Management Technologies . . . . .   | 4-24 |
| 4.2.3 Ocean Disposal . . . . .  | 4-44 |
| 4.2.4 Waste Utilization and Recovery of Various Waste By-Products . . . . .                           | 4-45 |
| 4.3 Summary . . . . .   | 4-53 |
| V. POTENTIAL DANGERS TO HUMAN HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT . . . . .                                    | 5-1  |
| 5.1 RCRA Subtitle C Hazardous Waste Characteristics and Listing Criteria . . . . .                    | 5-2  |
| 5.1.1 Corrosivity of Coal Combustion Wastes . . . . .   | 5-4  |
| 5.1.2 Extraction Procedure Toxicity of Coal Combustion Wastes . . . . .                               | 5-5  |
| 5.2 Effectiveness of Waste Containment at Utility Disposal Sites . . . . .                            | 5-28 |
| 5.2.1 ADL Study of Waste Disposal at Coal-Fired Power Plants . . . . .                                | 5-29 |
| 5.2.2 Franklin Associates Survey of State Ground-Water Data . . . . .                                 | 5-44 |
| 5.2.3 EnviroSphere Ground-Water Survey . . . . .  | 5-48 |
| 5.2.4 Summary . . . . .   | 5-52 |
| 5.3 Evidence of Damage . . . . .  | 5-53 |
| 5.3.1 EnviroSphere Case Study Analysis . . . . .  | 5-54 |
| 5.3.2 Dames & Moore Study of Environmental Impacts . . . . .  | 5-56 |
| 5.3.3 Case Studies of the Environmental Impact of Coal Combustion By-Product Waste Disposal . . . . . | 5-63 |
| 5.3.4 Summary . . . . .   | 5-67 |
| 5.4 Factors Affecting Exposure and Risk at Coal Combustion Waste Sites . . . . .                      | 5-68 |
| 5.4.1 Environmental Characteristics of Coal Combustion Waste Sites . . . . .                          | 5-69 |
| 5.4.2 Population Characteristics of Coal Combustion Waste Disposal Sites . . . . .                    | 5-83 |
| 5.4.3 Ecologic Characteristics of Coal Combustion Waste Disposal Sites . . . . .                      | 5-89 |
| 5.4.4 Multivariate Analysis . . . . .   | 5-93 |
| 5.5 Summary . . . . .   | 5-95 |

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S (cont'd)

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| VI. ECONOMIC COSTS AND IMPACTS . . . . .   | 6-1  |
| 6.1 Waste Disposal Costs Associated With<br>Current Disposal Methods . . . . .               | 6-2  |
| 6.1.1 Costs of Waste Placement and<br>Disposal . . . . .                                     | 6-5  |
| 6.1.2 Costs Associated with Lined<br>Disposal Facilities . . . . .                           | 6-11 |
| 6.2 Costs of Alternative Disposal Options . . . . .  | 6-12 |
| 6.2.1 Regulatory Alternatives Under<br>Subtitle C . . . . .                                  | 6-13 |
| 6.2.2 Cost Estimates for Individual RCRA<br>Subtitle C Disposal Standards . . . . .          | 6-17 |
| 6.2.3 Potential Costs to the Industry of RCRA<br>Subtitle C Waste Management . . . . .       | 6-30 |
| 6.3 Impact of Regulatory Alternatives on<br>Utilization of Coal Combustion Wastes . . . . .  | 6-33 |
| 6.4 Economic Impacts of Alternative Waste<br>Disposal Options . . . . .                      | 6-37 |
| 6.5 Summary . . . . .  | 6-43 |
| VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .   | 7-1  |
| 7.1 Scope of Report . . . . .  | 7-1  |
| 7.2 Summary of Report . . . . .  | 7-2  |
| 7.2.1 Location and Characteristics of Coal-<br>Fired Power Plants . . . . .                  | 7-2  |
| 7.2.2 Waste Quantities and Characteristics . . . . .   | 7-3  |
| 7.2.3 Waste Management Practices . . . . .   | 7-5  |
| 7.2.4 Potential Hazardous Characteristics . . . . .  | 7-6  |
| 7.2.5 Evidence of Environmental Transport<br>of Potentially Hazardous Constituents . . . . . | 7-7  |
| 7.2.6 Evidence of Damage . . . . .   | 7-9  |
| 7.2.7 Potential Costs of Regulation . . . . .  | 7-9  |
| 7.3 Recommendations . . . . .  | 7-11 |

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S (cont'd)

|              | Page  |
|--------------|---|
| Bibliography |   |
| Glossary     |   |
| Appendix A:  | Letter from Gary N. Dietrich, EPA, to Paul Emler, Jr.,<br>USWAG, January 13, 1981 and Memorandum from EPA<br>Headquarters to EPA Regional Directors, February<br>18, 1981 |
|              | A-1   |
| Appendix B:  | Methodology For Estimating Volume of Ash and FGD<br>Sludge Generation   |
|              | B-1   |
| Appendix C:  | Regulation of Coal Combustion Waste Disposal In<br>Seventeen High Coal-Burning States   |
|              | C-1   |
| Appendix D:  | Waste Fluid Studies   |
|              | D-1   |
| Appendix E:  | Arthur D. Little Study of Waste Disposal At Coal-Fired<br>Power Plants  |
|              | E-1   |
| Appendix F:  | Data On Sample of Coal-Fired Combustion Waste Disposal<br>Sites   |
|              | F-1   |
| Appendix G:  | Methodology For Calculating The Cost of Alternative<br>Waste Management Practices   |
|              | G-1   |

## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| <br><b>CHAPTER TWO</b>   |      |
| 2-1 Growth in Electricity Demand - 1975-2000 .....   | 2-2  |
| 2-2 Electricity Sales By Year and Class of Service .....   | 2-4  |
| 2-3 Electricity Demand by EPA Region: 1985 .....   | 2-5  |
| 2-4 EPA Federal Regions .....  | 2-6  |
| 2-5 Generating Capacity in the United States .....   | 2-8  |
| 2-6 Electricity Generation by Primary Energy<br>Source: 1975-2000 .....  | 2-15 |
| 2-7 Electric Utility Dependence on Coal by EPA Region: 1985 .....  | 2-17 |
| 2-8 U.S. Coal Consumption by Sector: 1975-2000 .....   | 2-19 |
| 2-9 Total Number and Average Size of Coal-Fired<br>Plants and Units .....  | 2-20 |
| 2-10 Range of Coal-Fired Power Plant Sizes .....   | 2-22 |
| 2-11 Process For Generating Electricity at Coal-Fired<br>Power Plants .....  | 2-23 |
| 2-12 Diagram of a Pulverized Coal Boiler .....   | 2-25 |
| 2-13 Diagram of a Cyclone Boiler .....   | 2-27 |
| 2-14 Characteristics of Various Types of Stokers .....   | 2-30 |
| 2-15 Diagram of a Spreader Stoker .....  | 2-31 |
| 2-16 Total Coal Boiler Capacity by EPA Region .....  | 2-32 |
| 2-17 Average Coal Boiler Size By Type of Boiler<br>and By EPA Region .....   | 2-33 |
| 2-18 Electric Utility Production of FGD Wastes: 1985 .....   | 2-36 |
| <br><b>CHAPTER THREE</b>   |      |
| 3-1 Representative Ash Contents By Producing<br>Region and Coal Rank: 1985 .....   | 3-9  |
| 3-2 Volume of Ash Generated by Coal-Fired Electric<br>Utility Power Plants -- 1975-2000 .....                                | 3-10 |
| 3-3 Average Ash Content of Coal Burned by Electric<br>Utility Power Plants in the U.S. -- 1975-2000 .....                    | 3-12 |
| 3-4 Representative Ranges of Values For the Physical<br>Characteristics of Fly Ash, Bottom Ash,<br>and Boiler Slag .....     | 3-14 |
| 3-5 Low and High Concentrations of Major Chemical<br>Constituents Found in Ash Generated by<br>Coal-Fired Power Plants ..... | 3-16 |
| 3-6 Element Concentrations In Ash From Three<br>Geographic Sources .....   | 3-18 |
| 3-7 Effect Of Geographic Coal Source On Ash<br>Element Concentration .....   | 3-19 |
| 3-8 Element Concentrations In Three Types Of Ash .....   | 3-20 |
| 3-9 Major Types of Flue Gas Desulfurization Systems .....  | 3-23 |
| 3-10 Flow Diagram of Wet Flue Gas Desulfurization System .....   | 3-25 |



## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

|   | Page |
|---|------|
| <b>CHAPTER THREE (Continued)</b>  |      |
| 3-11 Flow Diagram of Spray-Drying Flue Gas Desulfurization System .....   | 3-27 |
| 3-12 Flow Diagram of Dry Injection Flue Gas Desulfurization System .....  | 3-28 |
| 3-13 Flow Diagrams of Recovery Flue Gas Desulfurization Systems .....   | 3-30 |
| 3-14 FGD Capacity and FGD Sludge Generation -- 1970-2000 .....  | 3-32 |
| 3-15 Representative Ranges of Values for the Physical Characteristics of FGD Sludge .....                               | 3-36 |
| 3-16 Concentration of Major Chemical Constituents of Wet FGD Sludge Solids by Scrubber System and Source of Coal .....  | 3-39 |
| 3-17 Concentration of Major Chemical Constituents of Wet FGD Sludge Liquors by Scrubber System and Source of Coal ..... | 3-40 |
| 3-18 Concentration of Trace Elements Found in Wet-FGD Sludges .....   | 3-42 |
| 3-19 Annual Low-Volume Waste Generation At a Representative Coal-Fired Power Plant .....                                | 3-44 |
| 3-20 Characteristics of Boiler Blowdown .....   | 3-46 |
| 3-21 Characteristics of Coal Pile Runoff .....  | 3-48 |
| 3-22 Characteristics of Cooling Tower Blowdown .....  | 3-51 |
| 3-23 Characteristics of Spent Demineralizer Regenerants .....   | 3-53 |
| 3-24 Reported Characteristics of Gas-Side Cleaning Wastes .....   | 3-55 |
| 3-25 Characteristics of Spent Water-Side Alkaline Cleaning Wastes .....   | 3-56 |
| 3-26 Characteristics of Spent Water-Side Hydrochloric Acid Cleaning Wastes .....  | 3-58 |
| 3-27 Characteristics of Spent Water-Side Alkaline Passivating Wastes .....  | 3-59 |
| 3-28 Characteristics of Pyrites and Pyrite Transport Water .....  | 3-61 |
| <br><b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>   |      |
| 4-1 State Regulations Governing Coal Combustion Waste Disposal .....  | 4-3  |
| 4-2 Typical Surface Impoundment (Pond) Stages .....   | 4-12 |
| 4-3 Diagrams of Active and Closed Landfills .....   | 4-15 |
| 4-4 Utility Waste Management Facilities By EPA Region .....   | 4-19 |
| 4-5 Location of Utility Waste Management Facilities:<br>On-site versus Off-site .....                                   | 4-21 |
| 4-6 Installation of Liners For Leachate Control at Utility Waste Management Facilities .....                            | 4-31 |
| 4-7 Summary of Current Handling, Treatment and Disposal of Low-Volume Wastes .....                                      | 4-39 |



## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| <br><b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>  |      |
| 5-1 Maximum Concentration of Contaminants For Characteristic<br>of EP Toxicity .....                             | 5-6  |
| 5-2 Effect of Geographic Coal Source On Element<br>Concentration In Ash .....                                    | 5-10 |
| 5-3 Results of Tetra Tech Extraction Tests On Coal Combustion Ash ..   | 5-12 |
| 5-4 Results of Arthur D. Little Testing Showing<br>The Range of Concentration of Metals In<br>EP Extracts .....  | 5-17 |
| 5-5 EP Toxicity Analysis For Untreated and Treated Boiler<br>Chemical Cleaning Wastes .....                      | 5-21 |
| 5-6 EP Toxicity Test Results For Liquid Low-Volume Wastes .....  | 5-23 |
| 5-7 Comparison of EP and TCLP Extractions For Low-Volume Sludge<br>Dredged From Wastewater Ponds .....           | 5-24 |
| 5-8 EP Toxicity Test Results of Low-Volume Wastes Before<br>and After Co-Disposal .....                          | 5-26 |
| 5-9 Primary And Secondary Drinking Water Standards .....   | 5-30 |
| 5-10 Summary of Arthur D. Little's Ground-Water Quality<br>Data On Primary Drinking Water Exceedances .....      | 5-35 |
| 5-11 Summary of Arthur D. Little's Ground-Water<br>Quality Data on Secondary Drinking Water<br>Exceedances ..... | 5-37 |
| 5-12 Summary of Arthur D. Little's Surface-Water<br>Quality Data On Primary Drinking Water Exceedances .....     | 5-40 |
| 5-13 Summary of PDWS Exceedances in the Franklin<br>Associates Survey .....                                      | 5-46 |
| 5-14 Summary of SDWS Exceedances in the Franklin<br>Associates Survey .....                                      | 5-47 |
| 5-15 Summary of PDWS Exceedances in Envirosphere's<br>Ground-water Data .....                                    | 5-50 |
| 5-16 Summary of SDWS Exceedances in Envirosphere's<br>Ground-water Data .....                                    | 5-51 |
| 5-17 Distance Of Coal Combustion Waste Sites To Surface Water .....  | 5-72 |
| 5-18 Flow Of Nearest Surface-Water Body .....  | 5-74 |
| 5-19 Depth To Ground Water at Coal Combustion Waste Sites .....  | 5-77 |
| 5-20 Hydraulic Conductivity at Coal Combustion Waste Sites .....   | 5-78 |
| 5-21 Net Recharge at Coal Combustion Waste Sites .....   | 5-81 |
| 5-22 Ground-Water Hardness at Coal Combustion Waste Sites .....  | 5-82 |
| 5-23 Populations Within One Kilometer of Waste Sites .....   | 5-85 |
| 5-24 Populations Within Three Kilometers of Waste Sites .....  | 5-86 |
| 5-25 Populations Within Five Kilometers of Waste Sites .....   | 5-87 |
| 5-26 Populations Served By Public Water Systems Near Waste Sites ....  | 5-89 |
| 5-27 Ecological Status of Waste Sites .....  | 5-92 |
| <br><b>CHAPTER SIX</b>   |      |
| 6-1 Overview of Waste Handling and Disposal Options<br>for Coal Ash .....  | 6-3  |

## INDEX OF EXHIBITS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| CHAPTER SIX (Continued)  |      |
| 6-2 Overview of Waste Handling and Disposal Options<br>for FGD Waste .....                                   | 6-4  |
| 6-3 Ranges of Average Capital Costs Associated With<br>Coal-Fired Electric Utility Waste Disposal .....      | 6-6  |
| 6-4 Ranges of Average Total Costs For Coal-Fired<br>Electric Utility Waste Disposal .....                    | 6-7  |
| 6-5 Summary of Costs to Close Existing Waste Disposal<br>Facilities .....                                    | 6-23 |
| 6-6 Summary of Costs For Different Types of Lined<br>Waste Management Facilities .....                       | 6-28 |
| 6-7 Costs to the Electric Utility Industry For Hypothetical<br>RCRA Compliance Strategies .....              | 6-29 |
| 6-8 Summary of Economic Impacts on By-Product Utilization<br>Under Different RCRA Regulatory Scenarios ..... | 6-36 |
| 6-9 Impact of Current Waste Disposal Costs on Total<br>Electricity Generation Costs .....                    | 6-39 |
| 6-10 Impact of Alternative Disposal Options on Electricity<br>Generation Costs .....                         | 6-40 |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has prepared this report on fossil fuel combustion wastes pursuant to the requirements of Section 8002(n) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended in 1980. These amendments to the Act added Section 8002(n), which directed the Administrator of EPA to

conduct a detailed and comprehensive study and submit a report on the adverse effects on human health and the environment, if any, of the disposal and utilization of fly ash waste, bottom ash waste, slag waste, flue gas emission control waste, and other by-product materials generated primarily from the combustion of coal or other fossil fuels.

Pending the completion of this study, fossil fuel combustion wastes were exempted from the hazardous waste requirements established under RCRA. Under Section 3001(b)(3)(A), EPA is prohibited from regulating these wastes until at least six months after this report is submitted to Congress.

If EPA determines that fossil fuel combustion wastes are hazardous under RCRA, and therefore subject to regulation under Subtitle C, EPA has some flexibility to promulgate regulations that take into account the unique characteristics of these wastes. Section 3004(x) states ...

If ... fly ash waste, bottom ash waste, slag waste and flue gas emission control waste generated primarily from the combustion of coal or other fossil fuels ... is subject to regulation under this subtitle, the Administrator is authorized to modify the requirements of subsections (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (o) and (u) and section 3005(j) ... to take into account the special characteristics of such wastes, the practical difficulties associated with implementation of such requirements, and site-specific characteristics ... so long as such modified requirements assure protection of human health and the environment.

This report examines only those wastes generated from the combustion of coal by the electric utility industry. These wastes account for approximately 90 percent of all wastes generated from the combustion of fossil fuels. EPA has deferred study of the disposal of wastes generated by the combustion of other fossil fuels and from coal combustion in industries other than the electric utility industry until a later date.

Coal-fired power plants produce substantial quantities of wastes. In 1984 about 69 million tons of ash and 16 million tons of flue gas desulfurization wastes were generated. Because of increasing reliance on coal for producing electricity, by the year 2000 the amount of ash waste is expected to increase by about 75 percent to about 120 million tons annually; production of FGD wastes is expected to triple to about 50 million tons annually.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the high-volume ash and flue gas desulfurization wastes, coal-fired power plants also generate several lower-volume waste streams as a result of equipment maintenance and cleaning activities.

About one-fifth of all waste generated at coal-fired electric utility power plants is currently reused; the remaining four-fifths are typically disposed in surface impoundments or landfills. The recycled wastes, usually fly ash, bottom ash, or boiler slag, have been used primarily as cement additives, high-volume road construction material, and blasting grit. There is some potential for increased use of these wastes in such applications. However, barring the

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<sup>1</sup> It is possible that advances in coal combustion technology will alter the amount and types of coal-combustion wastes produced in the future. An analysis of these technological advances is beyond the scope of this report.

development of new utilization techniques, or major changes in combustion and environmental control technologies, the proportion of coal combustion wastes that are reused is unlikely to change significantly.

While utility waste management sites are currently exempt from RCRA hazardous waste requirements, they are subject to state and local level solid waste laws and regulations. There is substantial variation in the state-mandated disposal requirements.

Most utility waste management facilities were not designed to provide a high level of protection against leaching. Only about 25 percent of all facilities have liners to reduce off-site migration of leachate, although 40 percent of the generating units built since 1975 have liners. Additionally, only about 15 percent have leachate collection systems; about one-third of all facilities have ground-water monitoring systems to detect potential leachate problems. Both leachate collection and ground-water monitoring systems are more common at newer facilities.

The primary concern regarding the disposal of wastes from coal-fired power plants is the potential for waste leachate to cause ground-water contamination. Although most of the materials found in these wastes do not cause much concern (for example, over 95 percent of ash is composed of oxides of silicon, aluminum, iron, and calcium), small quantities of other constituents that could potentially damage human health and the environment may also be present. These constituents include arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, and selenium. At certain concentrations, these elements have toxic effects.



To assess the potential threat to health and the environment posed by these wastes and to document any specific damage cases, EPA, other agencies, and various private organizations sponsored several studies. The main research efforts cited in this Report to Congress are a 1985 study by Arthur D. Little, Inc. for EPA, which characterized the environmental effects of waste disposal at several utility disposal sites, and a series of reports submitted to the Agency in 1982 by the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group, the Edison Electric Institute, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The findings of these various research efforts indicate that most coal combustion wastes do not exhibit any of the four hazardous characteristics defined in RCRA Subpart C. The results of a substantial number of extraction procedure tests were examined; these tests indicated that metals do not generally leach out of coal combustion wastes at levels classified as hazardous under RCRA. The only metals which were found in any ash or sludge samples at "hazardous" levels were cadmium and arsenic. For boiler cleaning wastes, chromium and lead were sometimes found at levels classified as hazardous under RCRA. This waste stream was also found to be corrosive in a number of samples. Results of EP Tests performed on co-disposed high and low volume wastes indicate, however, that boiler cleaning wastes do not exhibit hazardous characteristics when co-disposed with ash.

While most of the laboratory results indicated that coal combustion wastes do not possess RCRA hazardous characteristics, in some instances, data on actual field observations indicate that migration of potentially hazardous constituents from utility waste disposal sites has occurred. For example, observed

concentrations of contaminants found in ground water downgradient from the sites exceed the Primary Drinking Water Standards about 5 percent of the time. Although the magnitude of the PDWS exceedances are typically not many times greater than the standard, a large number of disposal facilities report at least one PDWS exceedance at some time.

While a causal connection cannot always be made between the utility waste disposal site and the presence of contaminants at concentrations in excess of these standards, the available information indicates that some ground-water contamination from utility disposal sites is indeed occurring. The actual potential for exposure of human and ecological populations is likely to be limited, however, since ground water in the vicinity of utility waste disposal sites is not typically used for drinking water; the concentrations of contaminants in the ground water also tend to be diluted in nearby surface water bodies. These surface water bodies are typically used by electric utilities in the power plants for cooling and other purposes.

The electric utility industry currently spends about \$800 million annually to dispose of its coal-fired combustion wastes. Under current practices, costs for waste management at most basic facilities range from as little as \$2 per ton to as much as \$31 per ton. Mitigative measures to control potential leaching include installation of liners, leachate collection systems, and ground-water monitoring systems and corrective action to clean up ground-water contamination. These mitigative measures, which are currently used at some utility waste disposal sites, may reduce the likelihood of ground-water contamination, but may also substantially increase disposal costs. For example,

the incremental cost of new waste disposal practices, excluding corrective action costs or higher recycling costs, could range up to \$70 per ton, or \$3.7 billion annually if all wastes were listed as hazardous. While substantial on a total cost basis, these increases would be unlikely to significantly affect the rate at which existing power plants consume coal. Due to the competitiveness of alternative fuels for electricity generation at future power plants, however, any increase in disposal costs could potentially slow the growth in electric utility coal consumption in future years. Moreover, if new disposal standards require corrective action measures as set forth in 40 CFR 264.100, the costs to utilities could be extremely high and could have a substantial effect on the utility industry.

Based on the findings from this Report to Congress, the Agency presents three preliminary recommendations for those wastes included in the scope of this study. The recommendations are subject to change based on continuing consultations with other government agencies and new information submitted through the public hearings and comments on this report. Pursuant to the process outlined in RCRA 3001(b)(3)(C), EPA will announce its regulatory determination within six months after submitting this report to Congress.

First, EPA has concluded that coal combustion waste streams generally do not exhibit hazardous characteristics under current RCRA regulations. EPA does not intend to regulate under Subtitle C fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and flue gas desulfurization wastes. EPA's tentative conclusion is that current waste management practices appear to be adequate for protecting human health and the environment. The Agency prefers that these wastes remain under Subtitle D



authority. EPA will use section 7003 of RCRA and sections 104 and 106 of CERCLA to seek relief in any cases where wastes from coal combustion waste disposal sites pose substantial threats or imminent hazards to human health and the environment. Coal combustion waste problems can also be addressed under RCRA Section 7002, which authorizes citizen lawsuits for violations of Subtitle D requirements in 40 CFR Part 257.

Second, EPA is concerned that several other wastes from coal-fired utilities may exhibit the hazardous characteristics of corrosivity or EP toxicity and merit regulation under Subtitle C. EPA intends to consider whether these waste streams should be regulated under Subtitle C of RCRA based on further study and information obtained during the public comment period. The waste streams of most concern appear to be those produced during equipment maintenance and water purification, such as metal and boiler cleaning wastes. The information available to the Agency at this time does not allow EPA to determine the exact quantity of coal combustion wastes that may exhibit RCRA Subtitle C characteristics. However, sufficient information does exist to indicate that some equipment maintenance and water purification wastes do occasionally exhibit RCRA hazardous characteristics, and therefore, may pose a danger to human health and the environment. These wastes are similar to wastes produced by other industries that are subject to Subtitle C regulation, and waste management practices for coal combustion wastes are often similar to waste management practices employed by other industries. EPA is considering removing the exemption for all coal-fired utility wastes other than those identified in the first recommendation. The effect would be to apply Subtitle C regulation to any of those wastes that are hazardous by the RCRA characteristic tests. EPA

believes there are various treatment options available for these wastes that would render them nonhazardous without major costs or disruptions to the utilities.

Third, EPA encourages the utilization of coal combustion wastes as one method for reducing the amount of these wastes that need to be disposed to the extent such utilization can be done in an environmentally safe manner. From the information available to the Agency at this time, current waste utilization practices appear to be done in an environmentally safe manner. The Agency supports voluntary efforts by industry to investigate additional possibilities for utilizing coal combustion wastes.

Through its own analysis, evaluation of public comments, and consultation with other agencies, the Agency will reach a regulatory determination within six months of submission of this Report to Congress. In so doing, it will consider and evaluate a broad range of management control options consistent with protecting human health and the environment. Moreover, if the Agency determines that Subtitle C regulation is warranted, in accordance with Section 3004(x) EPA will take into account the "special characteristics of such waste, the practical difficulties associated with implementation of such requirements, and site-specific characteristics . . .," and will comply with the requirements of Executive Orders 12291 and 12498 and the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

This is the Environmental Protection Agency's Report to Congress on wastes from fossil fuel combustion, as required by section 8002(n) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. It describes sources and quantities of utility waste, current utilization and disposal practices and alternatives to these practices, potential dangers to human health and the environment, and the costs of current and alternative waste management practices. This report is based on numerous literature reviews and contractor studies; EPA's RCRA Docket contains copies of the source materials that the Agency used in preparing this report.

#### 1.1 Legislative History

Because Congress has amended the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act several times and EPA's regulatory program continues to evolve in response to these Congressional mandates and other additional information, a brief legislative and regulatory history is provided below.

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA, or the Act) of 1976 (Public Law 94-580) substantially amended the Solid Waste Disposal Act of 1965 and authorized the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish and enforce regulations concerning the identification, generation, transportation, and management of hazardous waste. These regulations would accomplish the Act's objectives of "...promote[ing] the protection of health and the environment ... and conserve[ing] valuable material and energy resources...."<sup>1</sup> RCRA comprises several subtitles, including Subtitle C-- Hazardous Waste

Management, and Subtitle D-- State or Regional Solid Waste Plans. The intent of the regulations promulgated under Subtitle C of the Act is that wastes identified as hazardous be properly managed from "cradle to grave," that is, from the time they are generated, during transport, throughout their use in various applications, and during disposal. As provided under RCRA Subtitle D, other wastes not considered hazardous as defined under Subtitle C are subject to State regulations.

On December 18, 1978, EPA proposed the first regulations to implement Subtitle C. In the course of preparing these regulations, EPA recognized that certain very large-volume wastes (e.g., wastes generated by utility power plants) could require special treatment:

... The Agency has very little information on the composition, characteristics, and the degree of hazard posed by these wastes, nor does the Agency yet have data on the effectiveness of current or potential waste management technologies or the technical or economic practicability of imposing the Subpart D standards [current RCRA section 3004--Standards applicable to owners and operators of hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities] on facilities managing such waste.

The limited information the Agency does have indicates that such waste occurs in very large volumes, that the potential hazards posed by the waste are relatively low, and that the waste generally is not amenable to the control techniques developed in Subpart D.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the Agency proposed a limited set of regulations for managing large-volume wastes, pending an additional rulemaking. Until that rulemaking was completed, EPA proposed exempting utility wastes from storage and disposal regulations.

On May 19, 1980, EPA promulgated the first regulations implementing Subtitle C of RCRA. By then, Congress was debating RCRA reauthorization, and both Houses had passed bills restricting EPA's ability to regulate utility wastes. Anticipating the enactment of legislation amending RCRA Section 3001, EPA excluded utility wastes from the promulgated regulations, writing in the preamble:

The United States Senate and House of Representatives have each recently passed a bill to reauthorize and amend RCRA (S.1156 and H.R.3994). Both bills contain amendments to Section 3001 which, if enacted, would repeal or temporarily suspend EPA's authority to regulate certain utility and energy development wastes as hazardous wastes under Subtitle C. These bills are now awaiting action by a conference committee. Because it appears likely that Congress will act before November 19, 1980 [the end of the six month comment period on the promulgated interim final regulations and the date on which they would take effect] to exempt these wastes, EPA has temporarily excluded them from this regulation (see section 261.4(b)). This exclusion will be revised, if necessary, to conform to the legislation which is ultimately enacted.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Congress did act before November 19, 1980; the Solid Waste Disposal Act Amendments (Public Law 96-482) were passed in October 1980.

As anticipated, the amendments temporarily exempted from regulation fly ash waste, bottom ash waste, boiler slag waste, and flue gas emission control waste generated primarily from the combustion of coal or other fossil fuels. In section 8002(n), Congress directed EPA to produce a report on the kinds of waste generated by the combustion of coal and other fossil fuels, which would include an analysis of eight topics:

1. the source and volumes of such material generated per year;



2. present disposal and utilization practices;
3. potential danger, if any, to human health and the environment from the disposal and reuse of such material;
4. documented cases in which danger to human health or the environment from surface runoff or leachate has been proved;
5. alternatives to current disposal methods;
6. the costs of such alternatives;
7. the impact of those alternatives on the use of coal and other natural resources; and
8. the current and potential utilization of such materials.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, in section 3001(b)(3)(C), Congress directed that within six months after submitting this report, EPA must conduct public hearings and decide whether regulating the management of coal combustion wastes under Subtitle C is warranted. Once the decision is made, the Administrator must publish the Agency's regulatory determination in the Federal Register.

In a January 1981 letter,<sup>5</sup> Gary Dietrich, then Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste, provided an interpretation of RCRA regulations concerning the exemption from regulation of fossil fuel combustion waste.<sup>6</sup> (This letter, as well as a February 18, 1981 memorandum that enclosed it as part of a mailing to EPA Regional Directors, is included as Appendix A.) The letter noted that the beneficial use of hazardous waste as a fuel was not subject to regulation, though it might well be subject to regulation in the future. This meant that utilities could burn as fuel a combination of

hazardous waste and coal, as long as more than 50 percent of the mixture was comprised of coal. The letter also addressed disposal, noting that wastes produced in conjunction with the burning of fossil fuels (e.g., cleaning and other maintenance-related wastes) may be exempt from Subtitle C regulations provided they are mixed and co-disposed or co-treated with fossil fuel wastes and provided "there is no evidence of any substantial environmental danger from these mixtures."<sup>7</sup> The letter concluded:

...Pending the completion of [further study on the hazards posed by waste from coal-fired utility plants and the collection of relevant data from the utility industry], EPA will interpret 40 CFR 261.4(b)(4) to mean that the following solid wastes are not hazardous wastes:

- (a) Fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and flue gas emission control wastes resulting from (1) the combustion solely of coal, oil, or natural gas, (2) the combustion of any mixture of these fossil fuels, or (3) the combustion of any mixture of coal and other fuels, where coal makes up more than 50 percent of the mixture.
- (b) Wastes produced in conjunction with the combustion of fossil fuels, which are necessarily associated with the production of energy, and which traditionally have been, and which actually are, mixed with and co-disposed or co-treated with fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, or flue gas emission control wastes from coal combustion.

This provision includes, but is not limited to, boiler cleaning solutions, boiler blowdown, demineralizer reagent, pyrites, and cooling tower blowdown.

In November 1984, Congress reauthorized RCRA by passing the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA). These amendments restricted the land disposal

of certain hazardous wastes without treatment, established minimum technology requirements for landfills and surface impoundments, issued corrective action requirements for continuing releases at permitted facilities, and established interim status requirements for surface impoundments. Under this new legislation, EPA was granted some flexibility to promulgate regulations that take into consideration the unique characteristics of several types of large-volume wastes, including wastes generated by utility power plants. Specifically, if EPA determined that some or all of the wastes from fossil fuel combustion were subject to regulation under Subtitle C, EPA was empowered to modify the standards imposed by HSWA "...to take into account the special characteristics of such wastes, the practical difficulties associated with implementation of such requirements, and site-specific characteristics ... so long as such modified requirements assure protection of human health and the environment."8

The HSWA Conference Report accompanying H.R. 2867 (which in its final amended form was passed by both Houses of Congress as Public Law 98-616) provides clarification:

This Amendment recognizes that even if some of the special study wastes [which include utility wastes as specified in Section 8002(n)] are determined to be hazardous it may not be necessary or appropriate because of their special characteristics and other factors, to subject such waste to the same requirements that are applicable to other hazardous wastes, and that protection of human health and the environment does not necessarily imply the uniform application of requirements developed for disposal of other hazardous wastes. The authority delegated to the Administrator under this section is both waste-specific and requirement-specific. The Administrator could also exercise the authority to modify requirements for different classes of wastes. Should these wastes become subject to the requirements of Section 3005(j), relating to the retrofit of surface impoundments, the Administrator could



modify such requirements so that they are not identical to the requirements that are applied to new surface impoundments containing such wastes. It is expected that before any of these wastes become subject to regulation under Subtitle C, the Administrator will determine whether the requirements of Section 3004(c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (o), and (u), and Section 3005(j) should be modified.<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2. Scope and Sources

This report addresses only the wastes generated by coal-fired electric utility power plants. Because this industry generates the vast majority of all fossil fuel combustion waste (nearly 90 percent),<sup>10</sup> EPA decided to focus its study in this area. This study does not address oil- and gas-fired electric utility power plants or coal, oil and gas-fired industrial boilers.

A number of research projects were undertaken to provide data for this report. EPA sponsored a major study of current coal ash and flue gas desulfurization waste management practices at coal-fired electric utility power plants.<sup>11</sup> In this study comprehensive environmental monitoring was conducted, which included characterizing the wastes, soils, ground water, and surface water at six disposal sites. The contractor (Arthur D. Little, Inc.) evaluated the environmental effects of the disposal practices used at these six sites and, by inference, what effects may be present at other utility waste disposal sites. They also performed extensive engineering and cost evaluations of disposal practices at the six sites.

EPA also sponsored a separate study effort to develop information on the incidences of ground water contamination resulting from utility waste management practices.<sup>12</sup> In this study, contamination was defined as the presence of hazardous constituents at levels above primary drinking water

standards. The main source of information for this phase of the research was a review of case files at the state offices having responsibility for such matters.

In addition, the Agency also reviewed reports submitted by the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group (USWAG), the Edison Electric Institute (EEI), and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).<sup>13</sup> The reports present information on the sources, volumes, and physical and chemical characteristics of waste streams; ground-water monitoring results assembled from various utility plants; damage case information from various sources; costs of complying with hazardous waste regulations; and resource recovery opportunities using utility wastes.

EPA also has incorporated findings from several documents prepared by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).<sup>14</sup> These reports examined the chemical composition of utility wastes, technologies for disposal and the costs associated with disposal, as well as results of leaching tests performed on utility wastes.

Finally, EPA gathered information from the Utility Data Institute's Power Statistics Database.<sup>15</sup> This database contains information concerning the size of utility power plants, location of power plants, the types of disposal technologies employed by each power plant, and the amount of waste produced by site and by region. The information on location of power plants was combined with hydrogeologic, population, and ecological profiles of these locations to analyze the potential for exposure to coal combustion wastes.

### 1.3 Organization

The following chapters of this report address the eight issues (enumerated earlier in this chapter) as required by Section 8002(n) as they apply to coal-fired combustion wastes generated by electric utilities. Chapter Two of this report provides an overview of the U.S. electric utility industry. Chapter Three examines the amount and types of wastes that are generated. Chapter Four discusses current waste management and disposal practices used by the electric utility industry, as well as alternatives to these practices; a review of applicable State regulations is included in this chapter. Chapter Five reviews the potential and documented impact of these wastes on human health and the environment, and Chapter Six evaluates costs associated with current waste disposal practices and additional costs that could be incurred under a variety of alternative waste management practices. Finally, Chapter Seven summarizes the conclusions contained in the previous chapters and presents recommendations.

## CHAPTER ONE

### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA), Section 1003(a).
- <sup>2</sup> Federal Register, Volume 43, No. 243, December 18, 1978, pp. 58991-58992.
- <sup>3</sup> Federal Register, Volume 45, No. 98, May 19, 1980, p. 33089.
- <sup>4</sup> RCRA, Section 8002(n).
- <sup>5</sup> Letter of January 13, 1981, from Gary N. Dietrich, Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste, to Paul Elmer, Jr., Chairman of the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group.
- <sup>6</sup> See 40 CFR 261.4.
- <sup>7</sup> Gary N. Dietrich, January 13, 1981, op. cit.; for further information, see Congressional Record, February 20, 1980, p. H 1102, remarks of Congressman Beville; also see remarks of Congressional Record, February 20, 1980, p. H 1104, remarks of Congressman Rahall.
- <sup>8</sup> RCRA, Section 3004(x)
- <sup>9</sup> H.R. Report 98-1133, pp. 93-94, October 3, 1984.
- <sup>10</sup> Most fossil fuel combustion wastes are generated from coal. For example, as indicated in Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes (by Tetrattech, Inc. for EPRI, September 1983), only about one percent of utility wastes are generated from oil; the remaining 99 percent is largely attributable to coal-fired electricity production. Of the coal consumed in the U.S., electric utilities burn nearly 90 percent (excluding metallurgical coal, which is not burned but is instead converted into coke primarily for making steel).
- <sup>11</sup> Arthur D. Little, Inc., Full-Scale Field Evaluation of Waste Disposal From Coal-Fired Electric Generating Plants. Prepared for EPA's Office of Research and Development, EPA Contract #68-02-3167; June 1985.
- <sup>12</sup> Franklin Associates, Ltd., Survey of Groundwater Contamination Cases at Coal Combustion Waste Disposal Sites, prepared for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, March 1984.
- <sup>13</sup> USWAG is an informal consortium of approximately 65 electric utility operating companies, EEI, and NRECA. The primary source used in the preparation of this report was Report and Technical Studies On The Disposal and Utilization of Fossil-Fuel Combustion By-Products, USWAG, EEI, and NRECA, October 26, 1982.

14 For example, see Impacts of Proposed RCRA Regulations and Other Related Federal Environmental Regulations on Utility Fossil Fuel-Fired Facilities; Prepared by Engineering-Science for DOE, DOE Contract Number DE-AC-01-79ET-13543, May 1983; Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI, September 1983; Analytical Aspects of the Fossil Energy Waste Sampling and Characterization Project, Prepared by Western Research Institute, DOE Order Number DE-AP20-84LC00022, March 1984; and Environmental Settings and Solid Residues Disposal in the Electric Utility Industry, EPRI, July 1984. More sources are included in the Bibliography.

15 Utility Data Institute's Power Statistics Database was developed under the auspices of the Edison Electric Institute to assist in their analysis of issues affecting the electric utility industry.



## CHAPTER TWO

### OVERVIEW OF THE ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY

This chapter provides a general overview of the U.S. electric utility industry. Section 2.1 summarizes electricity demand and discusses the overall structure of the electric utility industry. Section 2.2 focuses the discussion on the role that coal plays in generating electricity. Section 2.3 provides details of coal-fired electric generating technologies and the regional characteristics of coal-fired plants. The chapter concludes with a discussion in Section 2.4 of the waste streams that are produced during coal combustion.

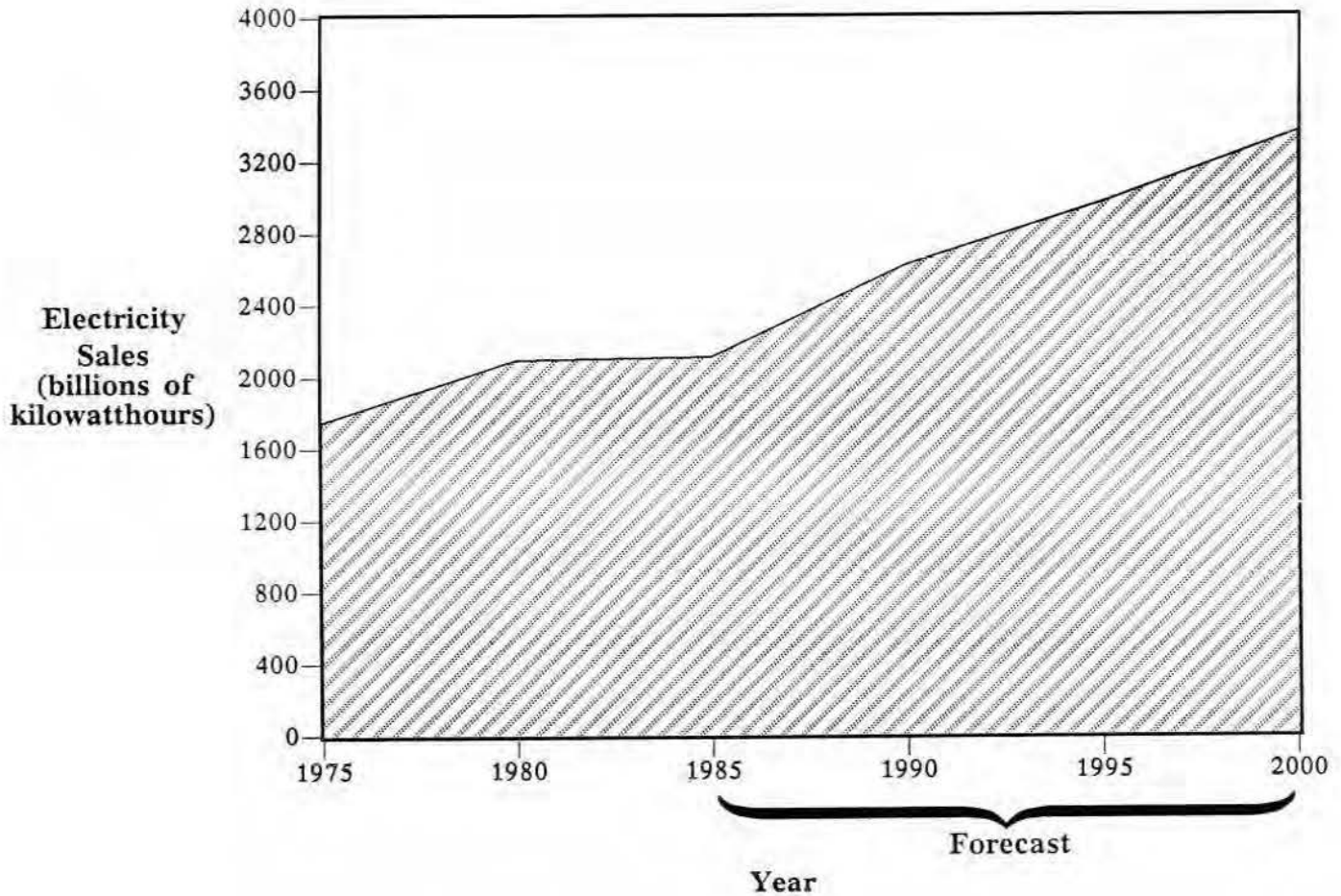
#### 2.1 THE DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY

The generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity is one of our nation's largest industries. With annual revenues in excess of \$140 billion and assets of about \$500 billion, the electric utility industry provides vital services to nearly every person in the U.S.<sup>1</sup>

Total demand for electricity in the U.S. has increased substantially in recent decades and will likely continue to grow in coming years (see Exhibit 2-1). From the 1940's through the early 1970's, electricity demand grew at about 7 percent per year, doubling approximately every ten years. This growth slowed beginning with the 1973 OPEC oil embargo and subsequent changes in the energy markets such as fuel price increases, shifts in the economy to markets that require less electricity to meet their power needs, and energy conservation measures. Since 1973, growth in electricity demand has averaged



EXHIBIT 2-1  
GROWTH IN ELECTRICITY DEMAND - 1975-2000



Sources: 1975-1985: Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Monthly, DOE/EIA-0226 (85/12), December 1985, p. 39.

1985-2000: ICF Incorporated, Analysis of 6 and 8 Million ton and 30 Year/NSPS and 30 Year/1.2 lb. Sulfur Dioxide Emission Reduction Cases, Prepared for Environmental Protection Agency, February 1986.



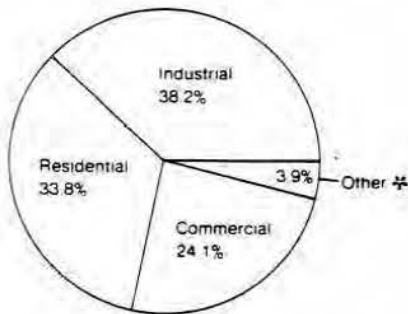
about three percent per year. Expectations are that electricity demand will continue to grow at an average rate of about 2 to 3 percent per year over the next several years.<sup>2</sup>

Every major segment of the U.S. economy relies on electricity to meet a portion of its energy needs. As shown in Exhibit 2-2, the demand for electricity is divided almost evenly between the industrial, commercial, and residential sectors. This demand for electricity has continued to increase over the last decade with total sales increasing from 1.7 million gigawatt-hours (Gwh) in 1975 to 2.3 million Gwh in 1985.<sup>3</sup> As demand has increased, electricity sales patterns have remained relatively consistent. Industry continues to be the largest consuming sector, although industry's fraction of total sales has decreased by about 2.7 percent from 1975 to 1985, primarily due to an increased market share for the commercial sector (i.e., stores, office buildings, restaurants, etc.). Residential customers consume about one-third of all electricity for basic necessities such as lighting, heating, and electrical appliances.

Virtually every geographic area in the U.S. relies on electricity supplied by the electric utility industry. As shown in Exhibit 2-3, electricity demand is highest in the eastern half of the U.S., particularly in EPA Regions 3-6 (see Exhibit 2-4 for a map of these EPA Regions). This level of demand is not surprising considering that these areas are the most heavily industrialized and densely populated areas of the country.

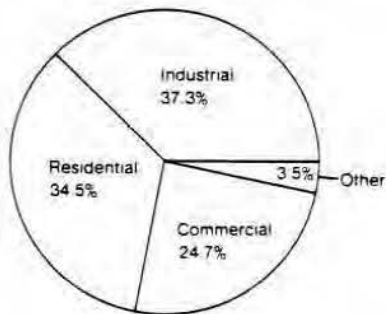
**EXHIBIT 2-2**  
**ELECTRICITY SALES BY YEAR AND CLASS OF SERVICE**  
**(gigawatt-hours)**

1975 SALES



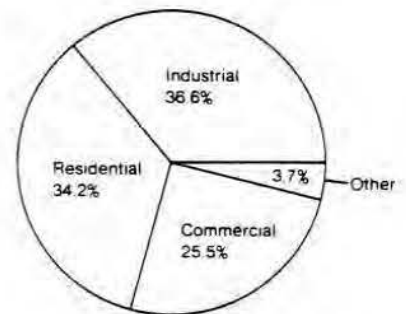
Total Sales = 1,733,024 kWh

1980 SALES



Total Sales = 2,126,094 kWh

1984 SALES



Total Sales = 2,285,532 kWh

Source: Edison Electric Institute, Statistical Yearbook of the Electric Utility Industry/1985, December 1986.

\*Includes street lighting, other public authorities, railroads and interdepartmental transfers within utilities (i.e., use of electricity by the utility itself).

EXHIBIT 2-3  
ELECTRICITY DEMAND by EPA REGION  
1985

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Millions of<br/>Kilowatt Hours</u> | <u>Percent<br/>of Total</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1                 | 86,397                                | 3.8                         |
| 2                 | 164,780                               | 7.2                         |
| 3                 | 230,055                               | 10.1                        |
| 4                 | 483,248                               | 21.2                        |
| 5                 | 428,873                               | 18.8                        |
| 6                 | 340,198                               | 14.8                        |
| 7                 | 112,076                               | 4.9                         |
| 8                 | 72,458                                | 3.2                         |
| 9                 | 227,006                               | 10.0                        |
| 10                | 135,716                               | 6.0                         |
| <hr/>             |                                       |                             |
| Total U.S.        | 2,280,585                             | 100.0                       |

Source: Edison Electric Institute, Statistical Yearbook of the Electric Utility Industry/1985, December 1986.

EPA FEDERAL REGIONS



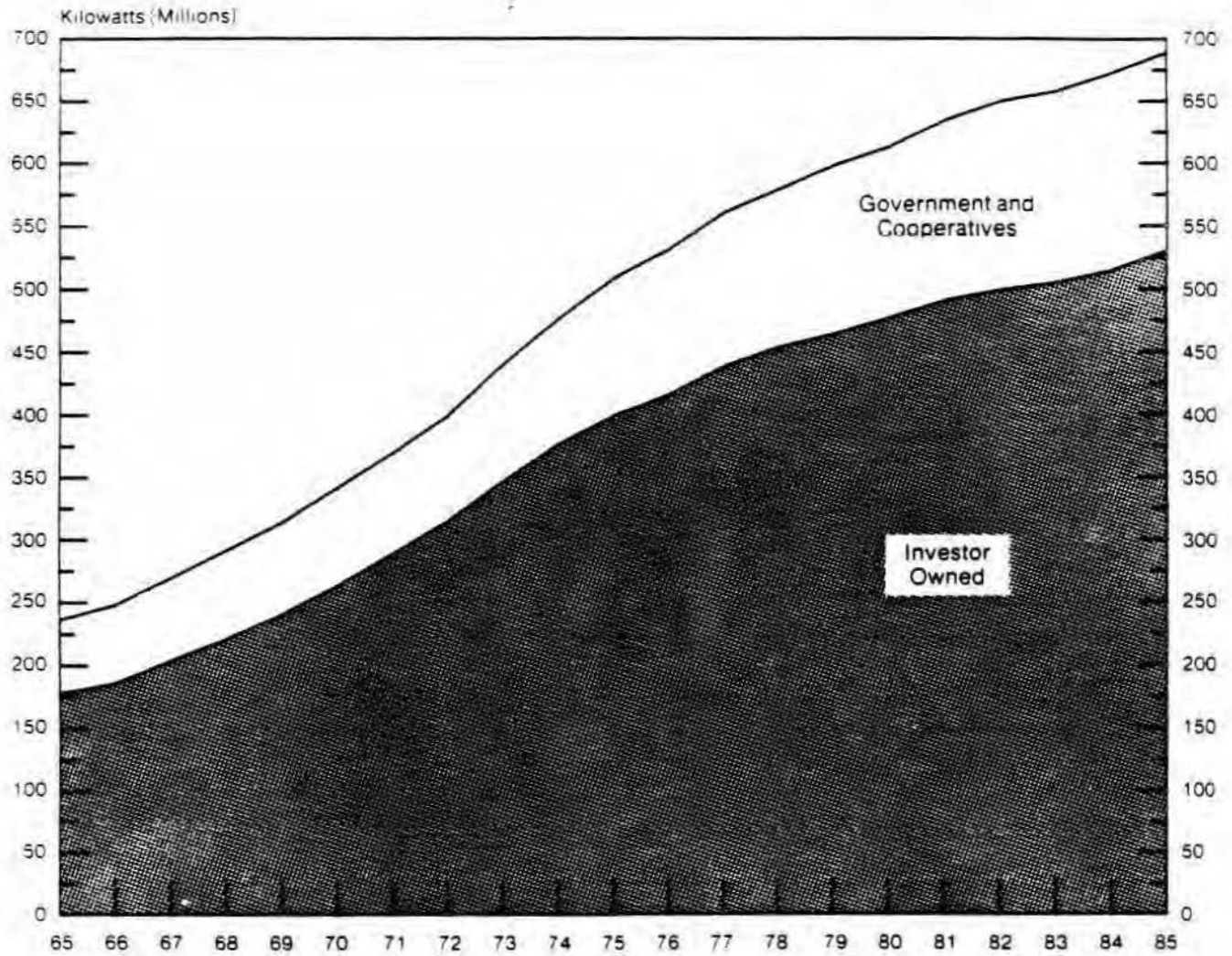
### **2.1.1 Structure of the U.S. Electric Utility Industry**

The U.S. electric power industry is a combination of private, Federal, and public nonprofit organizations. The distribution of capacity, generation, revenue, and sales differs widely among these ownership groups since each group has different objectives, organizational characteristics, and financing methods. Private investor-owned utilities dominate the U.S. electric utility industry as shown in Exhibit 2-5. Investor-owned utilities have historically served large consolidated markets to take advantage of economies of scale. Federal, municipal, cooperative, and other publicly-owned utilities have generally served smaller markets where local governments or nonprofit organizations have had access to limited supplies of less expensive Federal power or to government-supplied capital for power plant construction. These circumstances have allowed municipal, cooperative, or other publicly-owned utilities to predominate in areas not traditionally served by investor-owned utilities.<sup>4</sup> A brief discussion of each type of organization is provided below.

#### **2.1.1.1 Investor-Owned Utilities**

Investor-owned utilities account for about three-quarters of all U.S. electric utility generating capacity, generation, sales, and revenue. Investor-owned utilities are privately owned, profit-oriented businesses granted service monopolies in certain geographic areas. As franchised monopolies, they are obligated to provide service to all customers within their geographic area. In providing this service, investor-owned utilities are required to charge reasonable prices, to charge similar prices to similar

EXHIBIT 2-5  
GENERATING CAPACITY IN THE UNITED STATES



Source: Edison Electric Institute, Statistical Yearbook for the Electric Utility Industry/1985, December 1986.



customers, and to give customers access to services under similar conditions.<sup>5</sup> Investor-owned utilities operate in all states except Nebraska (which depends primarily on public power districts and rural electric cooperatives for electricity). In 1984, consumers paid an average of 6.5 cents per kilowatt-hour (kwh) for privately-produced power compared to the industry average from all ownership groups of 6.3 cents per kilowatt-hour (an average customer consumed 23,150 kwh in 1984).<sup>6</sup>

#### **2.1.1.2 Federal Power**

The U.S. Government is the second largest producer of electricity in the United States with roughly 10 percent of total U.S. generation and generating capacity. Consumers of Federal power paid the lowest rate among the different ownership groups -- only 3.5 cents per kwh on average in 1984, (compared to an industry average of 6.3 cents per kwh).<sup>7</sup> Federal power production is designed to provide power at the lowest possible rate, with preference in the sale of electricity given to public entities and cooperatives.<sup>8</sup> In this role the Federal Government is primarily a generator and wholesaler of electricity to other organizations, rather than a direct distributor to electricity consumers.<sup>9</sup>

#### **2.1.1.3 Municipal Utilities**

Municipal utilities are nonprofit local government agencies designed to serve their customers at the lowest possible cost. Most municipal utilities simply distribute power obtained from one of the other ownership groups (e.g., Federal facilities), although some larger ones also generate and transmit

power. Municipally-owned electric utilities rank third in the amount of installed capacity (5.5 percent of total generating capacity), but comprise the single most numerous ownership group (1,811 utilities in 1984).<sup>10</sup> Average revenue per kwh sold in 1984 was 5.69 cents compared to an industry average of 6.3 cents per kwh. Municipal utilities are exempt from local, state, and Federal taxes and have access to less expensive capital via public financing and less expensive Federal power. As a result, municipal utilities can generally afford to charge less than investor-owned utilities for the power they produce.<sup>11</sup>

#### **2.1.1.4 Cooperatives**

Rural electric cooperatives are owned by and provide electricity to their members and currently operate in 46 states. They have the lowest amount of installed capacity among all ownership categories (24.7 gigawatts in 1984 or less than 4 percent of all capacity).<sup>12</sup>

In 1984, average revenue for cooperatives from sales to consumers was 6.7 cents per kwh, the highest of all ownership types (the industry average was 6.3 cents per kwh). Large construction programs in the 1970's usually account for the high rates.<sup>13</sup>

#### **2.1.1.5 Other Public Entities**

There are a variety of other public organizations that provide electric power, including public power districts, state authorities, irrigation districts, and various other State organizations. These other public entities

operated a combined total of 32.8 gigawatts in 1984, or about 5 percent of all generating capacity in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> The public power districts are concentrated in five states -- Nebraska, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, and California. The average price paid for electricity from all of these entities was 4.37 cents per kwh in 1984, compared to an industry average of 6.3 cents per kwh.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.1.2 Economic and Environmental Regulation of the Electric Utility Industry<sup>16</sup>**

The electric utility industry is regulated by several different regulatory bodies at both the Federal and State levels. According to the U.S. Department of Energy: "The basic purpose of public utility regulation is to assure adequate service to all public utility patrons, without discrimination and at the lowest reasonable rates consistent with the interests both of the public and the electric utilities."<sup>17</sup> This regulation involves both economic and environmental objectives. As natural monopolies, electric utilities are regulated to ensure that adequate, reliable supplies of electric power are available to the public at a reasonable cost. Additionally, since the operations of electric utilities can affect environmental quality, they are regulated to ensure the protection of the nation's air and water resources. This section briefly reviews the main regulatory bodies that affect the electric utility industry.

#### **2.1.2.1 Federal Regulation**

There are five major organizations at the Federal level that regulate some aspect of the electric utility industry -- the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Economic Regulatory Administration (ERA), the

Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

- The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) oversees various aspects of the electric utility, natural gas, hydroelectric, and oil pipeline industries. FERC approves the rates and standards for wholesale interstate electricity sales between investor-owned utilities and other investor-owned utilities, municipals, or cooperatives (these sales are about 15 percent of total U.S. electricity sales).<sup>18</sup> It determines whether these rates are reasonable and non-discriminatory. FERC also oversees utility mergers and the issuance of certain stock and debt securities, approves the rates of Federal Power Marketing Administrations, and administers agreements between utilities concerning electricity transmission.
- The Economic Regulatory Administration (ERA) has several responsibilities, including administering a program to ensure that all future power plants have the potential to burn coal, regulating international electricity transmission connections, and licensing exports of power.
- The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) is an independent regulatory agency established to regulate interstate transactions in corporate securities and stock exchanges. With respect to the electric utility industry, the SEC regulates the purchase and sale of securities, utility properties, and other assets.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is involved only in the regulation of nuclear facilities owned and operated by the utility industry. Its main responsibilities include licensing the construction and operation of nuclear facilities, licensing the possession, use, transportation, handling, and disposal of nuclear materials, licensing the export of nuclear reactors and the import and export of uranium and plutonium, and regulating activities affecting the protection of nuclear facilities and materials.

In addition to these regulatory bodies, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the main Federal regulatory authority for protecting the nation's air and water quality. As part of its overall authority, EPA sets limits on the level of air pollutants emitted from electric power plants and develops regulations to control discharges of specific water pollutants.

Throughout this Report to Congress key regulations that affect the electric utility industry are discussed. While EPA often takes the Federal lead when these regulations are developed, the Agency also works closely with the States since they often retain primary authority for implementing and enforcing standards (for example, see Section 4.1 on state regulation of coal combustion wastes).

#### **2.1.2.2 State Regulation**

States are also involved in the environmental and economic regulation of the electric utility industry. As mentioned above, the States often share regulatory authority with the various Federal organizations. For environmental regulation the States often have their own environmental protection agencies to implement and enforce State and Federal environmental regulations. For example, they are responsible for drafting State Implementation Plans (SIP) that must be approved by the U.S. EPA to attain National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Similarly, as will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, the States have authority for implementing and enforcing regulations concerning the disposal of solid wastes under Subtitle D of RCRA. Environmental regulations for which the States exercise regulatory authority are discussed throughout this Report to Congress.

States are also very involved in the economic regulation of the electric utility industry. The primary goals of state economic regulation is usually to provide adequate nondiscriminatory service to electricity consumers at reasonable prices.<sup>19</sup> This is usually accomplished by state regulatory



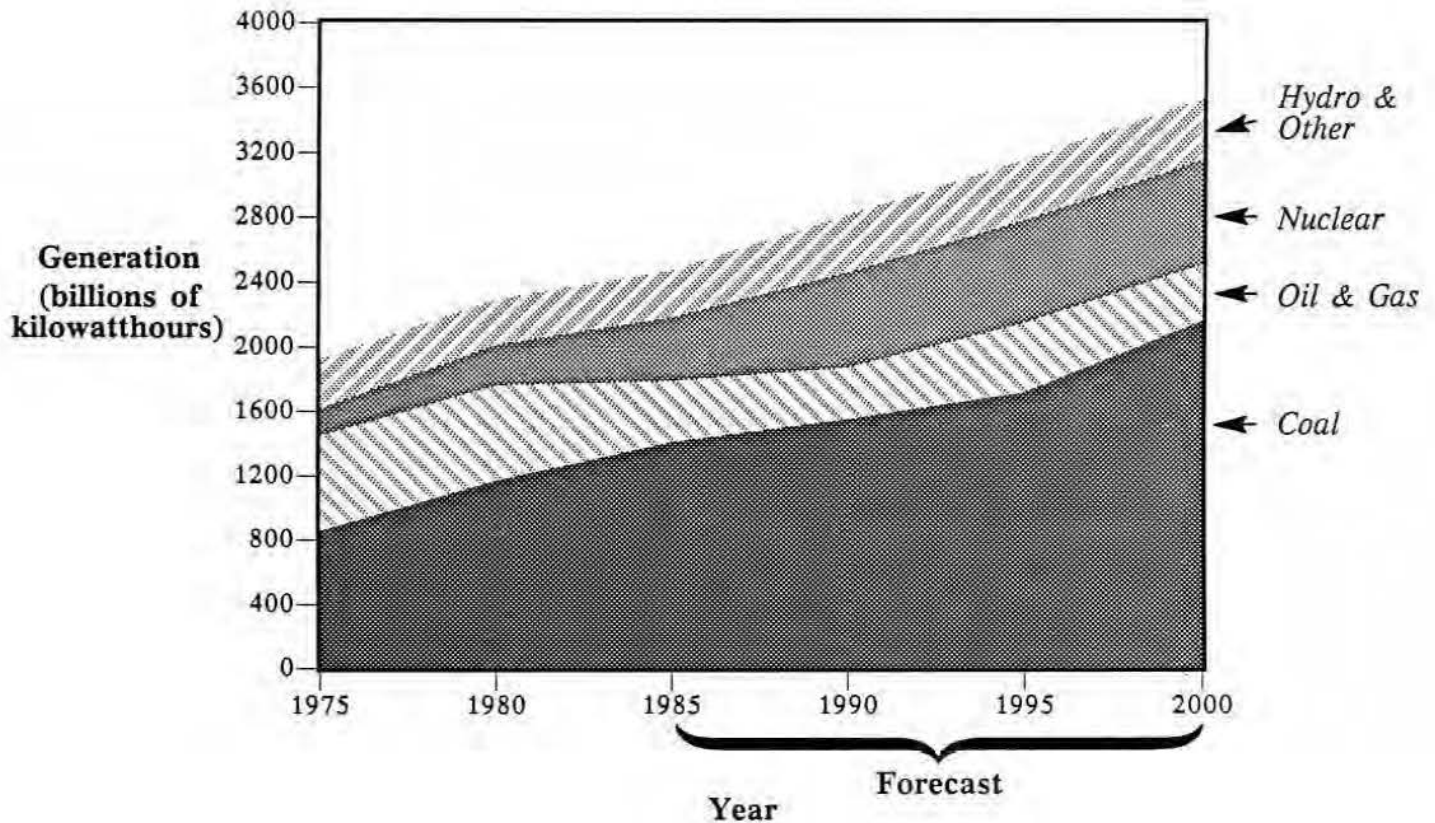
agencies such as public utility commissions. The amount of authority these state regulatory agencies have can differ widely from state to state. However, these agencies usually have the authority to approve electricity price levels and the rates of return allowed for utility stockholders. State regulators also approve the franchise under which the utility operates. Licensing for construction and operation and approval of the sites at which power plants will be built are also important functions of some state regulatory commissions. Other areas into which some commissions have entered to ensure that utility activities protect the public interest include setting rules about when competitive bids are required, promulgating company performance standards, deriving methods for allocating power during shortages, establishing billing and safety rules, and promoting conservation.<sup>20</sup>

## 2.2 IMPORTANCE OF COAL TO ELECTRIC UTILITIES

Electric utilities use many different technologies and energy sources to generate electricity. At present, as shown in Exhibit 2-6, over 70 percent of electricity in the U.S. is generated by the combustion of fossil fuels (coal, oil and natural gas); most of the remaining 30 percent is generated by hydroelectric plants and nuclear power plants. A small portion of electricity demand is satisfied by alternative sources such as geothermal energy, renewable resource technologies (e.g., wood, solar energy, wind), purchased power from industrial and commercial cogeneration (cogeneration is the simultaneous production of electricity and process steam; the electricity is typically used by the cogenerator or sold to another industry while the steam is used for various production processes), and power imports (primarily from Canada).



## EXHIBIT 2-6

ELECTRICITY GENERATION BY PRIMARY ENERGY SOURCE  
1975-2000

Source: 1975-1985: Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Monthly DOE/EIA-0226 (85/12), December 1985, p. 10.

1985-2000: ICF Incorporated, Analysis of 6 and 8 million Ton and 30 Year/NSPS and 30 Year/1.2 lb. Sulfur Dioxide Emission Reduction Cases, Prepared for Environmental Protection Agency, February 1986.

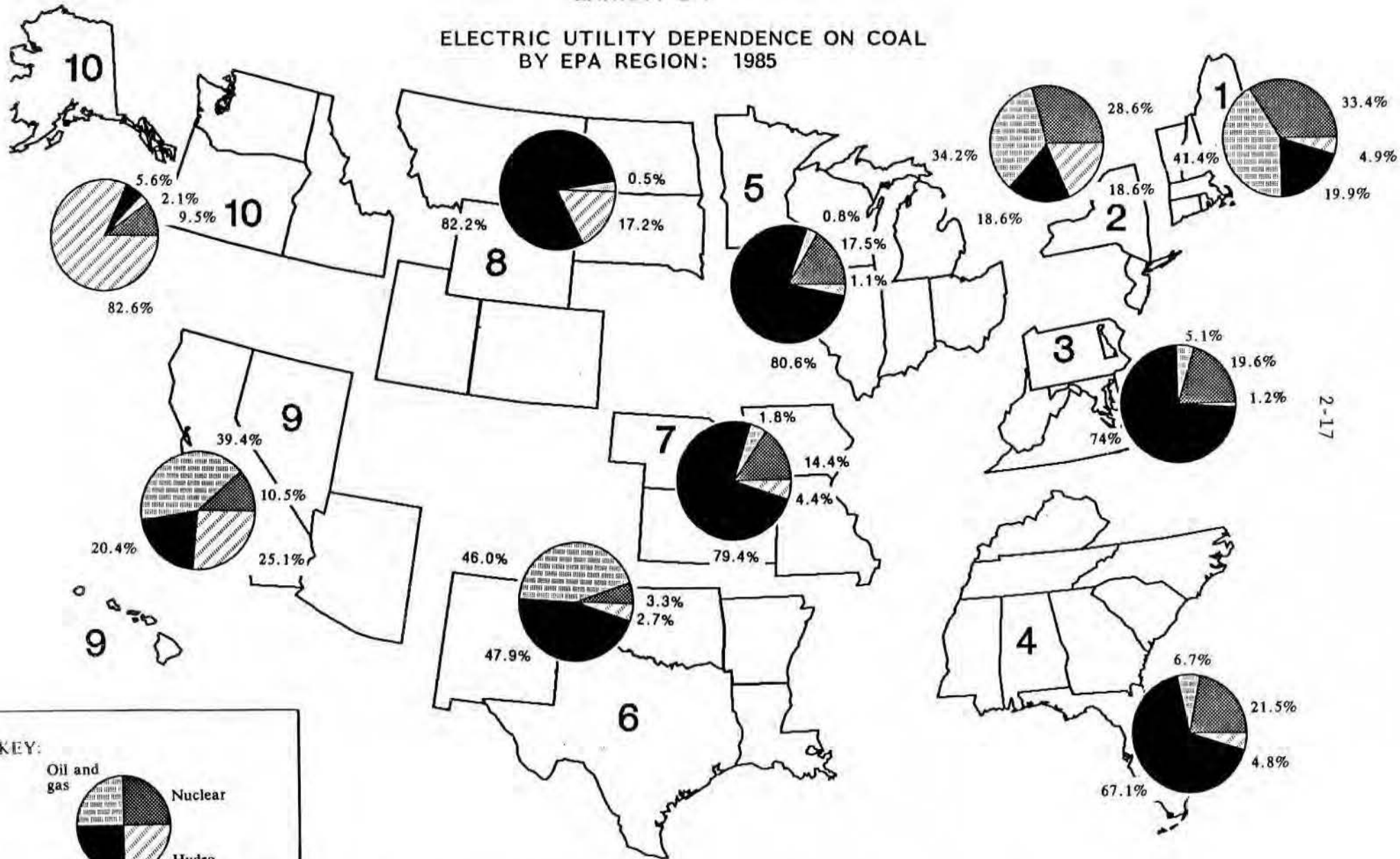
In 1984, coal accounted for more than half of all the electricity generated in the U.S.<sup>21</sup> The portion of electricity generated from coal is expected to remain at about this level throughout the rest of the century since coal-fired generation is expected to remain economically attractive. The relative contribution to total generation made by other fossil fuels and by hydroelectric power will likely continue to decline, while the contribution made by nuclear power plants will likely increase for the next few years as several new units come on-line. However, the addition of nuclear plants beyond those now under construction will be minimal, leading to an eventual decline in nuclear's relative contribution. Cogeneration, power imports, and emerging technologies are expected to continue to grow, but their share of total generation will remain small. As a result, coal will continue to be the major fuel source for electricity generation.

The extent of the electric utility industry's dependence on coal varies geographically. Exhibit 2-7 shows that coal accounts for over three-quarters of electricity generation in some regions, but less than half in others. For example, in the far West and southern Plains states, the local availability of oil, gas, and hydroelectric power has limited regional dependence on coal. In many of the eastern regions, where coal is relatively more accessible and less costly than oil or gas, coal is significantly more dominant. Despite these regional variations, however, coal-fired electricity generation is an important source of electricity in most regions of the United States.

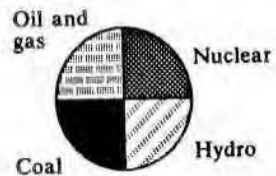
The use of coal by electric utilities has also made the coal and electric utility industries highly interdependent; not only does coal-fired electricity generation account for over half of the electricity produced in the U.S., but

# EXHIBIT 2-7

## ELECTRIC UTILITY DEPENDENCE ON COAL BY EPA REGION: 1985



### KEY:



Percentages represent the proportion of the total electricity generated in the region by each type of fuel.

Source: Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Annual 1985, DOE/EIA-0348(85), pp.17-30.

the electric utility industry is the largest customer of the coal industry, purchasing approximately three-quarters of all coal mined, as shown in Exhibit 2-8. This interdependence has increased as electric utility coal consumption has grown from 406 million tons in 1975 to over 600 million tons in 1985.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, electric utility coal consumption is expected to continue to increase to about 1 billion tons by the year 2000.

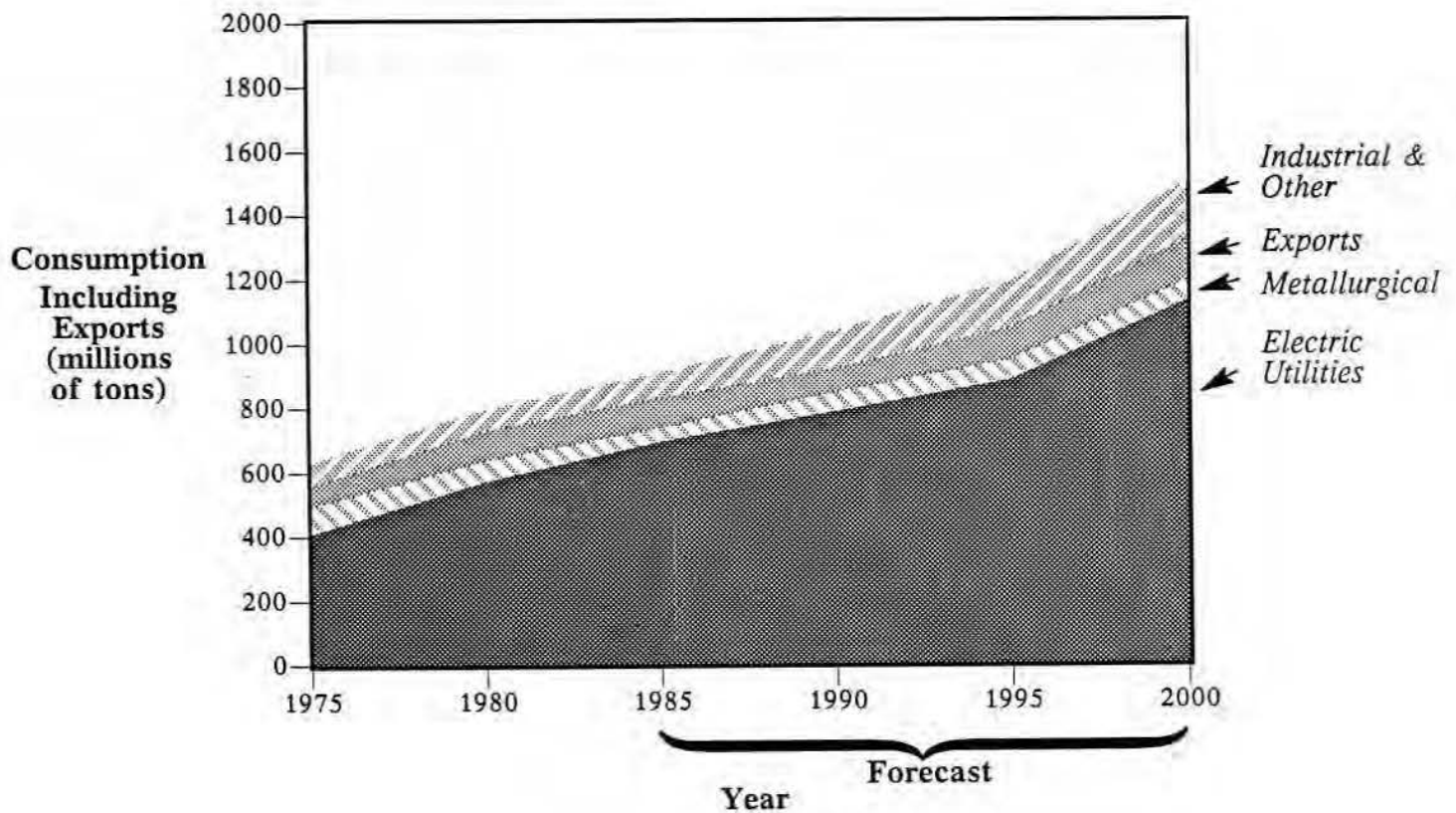
### **2.3 OVERVIEW OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS**

Coal-fired power plants can vary greatly in terms of their generating capacity and the type of boiler technology they employ which, in turn, can affect the amount and type of combustion wastes produced. This section discusses the geographic differences in the size of plants and generating units and describes the three main boiler types along with the regional importance of each.

#### **2.3.1 Regional Characteristics of Coal-Fired Electric Generating Plants**

Coal-fired power plants can range in size from less than 50 MW to larger than 3000 MW. In many cases, particularly at the larger power plants, one power plant site may be the location for more than one generating unit (a generating unit is usually one combination of a boiler, turbine, and generator for producing electricity). Exhibit 2-9 shows the number of coal-fired power plants and number of units in each EPA region and their average size in megawatts. On average, each power plant site is comprised of about three generating units. The average generating capacity of coal-fired power plants in the U.S. is approximately 584 MW, with an average unit size of 257 MW.

EXHIBIT 2-8  
U.S. COAL CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR  
1975-2000



Sources: 1975-1985: Energy Information Administration, Annual Energy Review 1985, DOE/EIA-0384 (85), April 1985, pp. 167, 169.

1985-2000: ICF Incorporated, Analysis of 6 and 8 Million Ton and 30 Year/NSPS and 30 Year/1.2 lb. Sulfur Dioxide Emission Reduction Cases, Prepared for Environmental Protection Agency, February 1986.

## EXHIBIT 2-9

## TOTAL NUMBER AND AVERAGE SIZE OF COAL-FIRED PLANTS AND UNITS

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Number<br/>of Plants</u> | <u>Average Size<br/>(MW)</u> | <u>Number<br/>of Units a/</u> | <u>Average Size a/<br/>(MW)</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1                 | 6                           | 374                          | 18                            | 158                             |
| 2                 | 17                          | 297                          | 39                            | 138                             |
| 3                 | 57                          | 753                          | 144                           | 308                             |
| 4                 | 93                          | 799                          | 295                           | 301                             |
| 5                 | 171                         | 492                          | 492                           | 185                             |
| 6                 | 39                          | 852                          | 87                            | 580                             |
| 7                 | 66                          | 400                          | 149                           | 186                             |
| 8                 | 48                          | 454                          | 109                           | 250                             |
| 9                 | 13                          | 603                          | 34                            | 383                             |
| 10                | <u>4</u>                    | <u>479</u>                   | <u>11</u>                     | <u>382</u>                      |
| U.S. Total        | 514                         | 584                          | 1378                          | 257                             |

---

Source: Utility Data Institute Power Statistics Database.

a/ The total amount of generating capacity indicated by multiplying the number of units by their average size (e.g., 1378 units X 257 Mw = 354,146 Mw) is greater than the amount indicated by multiplying the number of power plants by their average (e.g., 514 plants X 584 Mw = 300,176 Mw) because the information in the UDI Power Statistics Database by generating units includes units planned, currently under construction, etc. while the information by power plants refers only to power plants currently operating.



Regional averages for power plant size range from 297 MW in Region 2 to 852 MW in Region 6. Unit sizes range from an average of 138 Mw in Region 2 to 580 Mw in Region 6. Individual power plants and units can be larger or smaller than these averages indicate.

The majority of coal-fired plants (60%) are smaller than 500 MW, while only about 4 percent of U.S. coal-fired power plants have a generating capacity exceeding 2000 MW. Exhibit 2-10 shows the distribution of coal-fired plant sizes across EPA regions.

### **2.3.2 Electricity Generating Technologies**

The basic process by which electricity is produced with coal is shown in Exhibit 2-11. When coal is burned to produce electricity, there are three key components that are critical to the operation of the power plant: the boiler, turbine, and generator. As coal is fed into the boiler, it is burned in the boiler's furnace. In the boiler there are a series of water-filled pipes. As heat is released during combustion, the water is converted to steam until it reaches temperatures that can exceed 1000°F and pressures that approach 4000 pounds per square inch. This high pressure, high temperature steam is then injected into a turbine, causing the turbine blades to rotate. The turbine, in turn, is connected to a generator, so the mechanical energy available from the rotating turbine blades is transformed into electrical energy. The electricity produced by this process is distributed via transmission lines to residential, commercial, and industrial end-users who rely on the power to meet their electrical requirements. Although each step of this process is critical to the production of electricity, this study focuses on boilers only

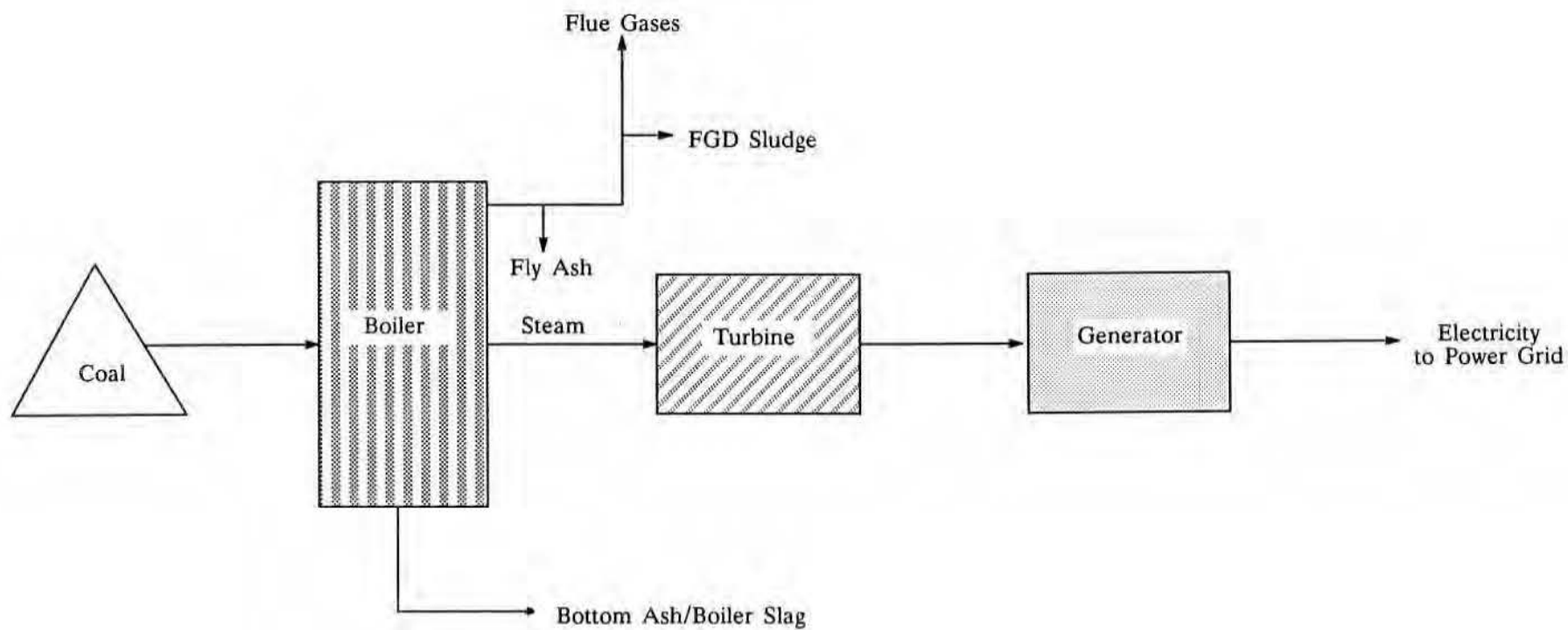
## EXHIBIT 2-10

RANGE OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT SIZES  
(number of plants)

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Power Plant Size</u>     |                             |                              |                               |                           | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
|                   | <u>&lt;100</u><br><u>MW</u> | <u>101-500</u><br><u>MW</u> | <u>501-1000</u><br><u>MW</u> | <u>1001-2000</u><br><u>MW</u> | <u>≥2000</u><br><u>MW</u> |              |
| 1                 | 1                           | 4                           | 0                            | 1                             | 0                         | 6            |
| 2                 | 6                           | 6                           | 5                            | 0                             | 0                         | 17           |
| 3                 | 6                           | 23                          | 11                           | 14                            | 3                         | 57           |
| 4                 | 15                          | 31                          | 17                           | 23                            | 7                         | 93           |
| 5                 | 63                          | 51                          | 23                           | 29                            | 5                         | 171          |
| 6                 | 10                          | 4                           | 10                           | 12                            | 3                         | 39           |
| 7                 | 25                          | 24                          | 8                            | 7                             | 2                         | 66           |
| 8                 | 18                          | 14                          | 10                           | 4                             | 2                         | 48           |
| 9                 | 5                           | 2                           | 4                            | 1                             | 1                         | 13           |
| 10                | <u>2</u>                    | <u>0</u>                    | <u>1</u>                     | <u>1</u>                      | <u>0</u>                  | <u>4</u>     |
| U.S. Total        | 151                         | 159                         | 89                           | 92                            | 23                        | 514          |

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Source: Utility Data Institute Power Statistics Database.

PROCESS FOR GENERATING ELECTRICITY  
AT COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS

since it is in the boiler where the combustion wastes are produced as the coal is burned.

There are three main types of boilers: (1) pulverizers, (2) cyclones, and (3) stokers. As discussed below in greater detail, the key differences between these boiler types are operating size and the procedures used for handling and burning the coal. Pulverized coal boilers are so-named because the coal is finely pulverized prior to combustion; most utility boilers are this type. Cyclones have been used in past utility applications, but have not been built recently. They are called cyclones because of the cyclone-like vortex created by the coal particles in the furnace during combustion. Stoker boilers are usually used when smaller capacities are required (e.g., 20-30 MW) and burn coal in a variety of sizes.

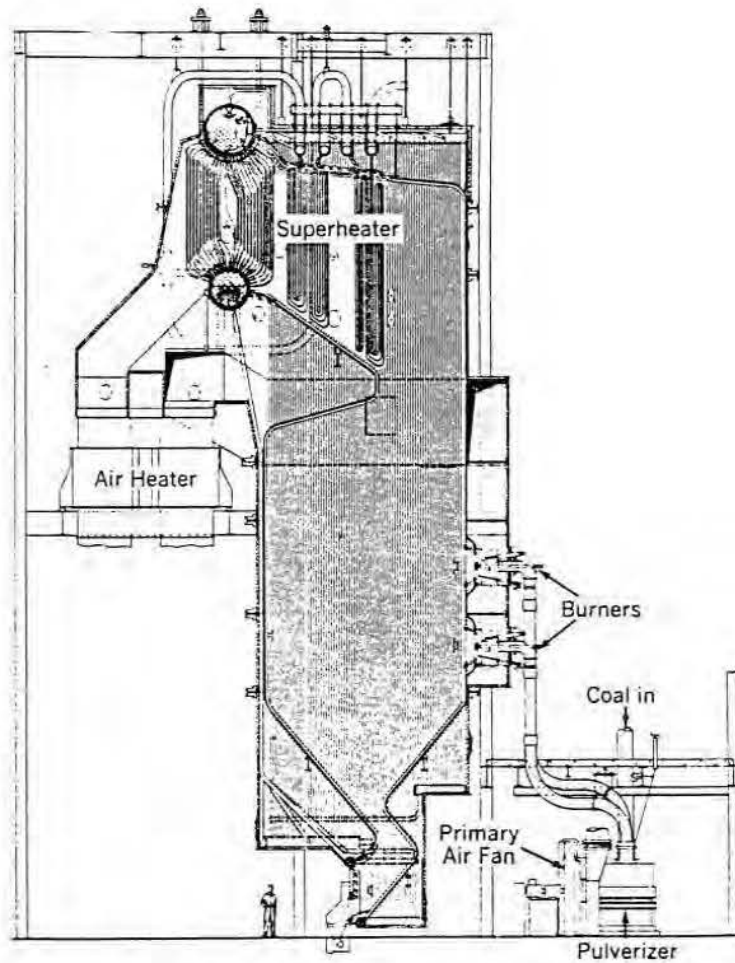
A brief description of each of these coal combustion technologies follows.<sup>23</sup>

#### **2.3.2.1 Pulverized-Coal Boiler**

Exhibit 2-12 shows a typical pulverized-coal boiler setup. In a pulverized coal boiler, coal is ground to a fine size (about 200 mesh, which is powder-like) in a pulverizer or mill. The pulverized fuel is then carried to the burners by forced air injection and blown into the furnace, where it is burned in suspension. Much of the ash remaining after combustion remains airborne and is carried from the furnace by the flue gas stream (i.e., it becomes fly ash; see Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion of types of waste and how they are produced). Some ash is deposited on the furnace walls,

EXHIBIT 2-12

DIAGRAM OF A PULVERIZED COAL BOILER



Two-drum boiler direct-fired with pulverized coal.

Source: Babcock and Wilcox Co., Steam: Its Generation and Use, New York, NY 1978.

where it agglomerates and may sinter or fuse. Ash that falls to the bottom of the furnace is removed via an ash hopper. Ash deposits and slagging are more of a problem in pulverized coal boilers than in stoker boilers.

Most modern pulverized-coal boilers have dry-bottom furnaces; that is, the ash is intended to be removed as a dry solid before complete melting occurs. As a result, for dry-bottom boilers, the ash-fusion temperature (the melting point) of the coal must be high enough to prevent the ash from becoming a running slag (i.e., a liquid form). Wet-bottom, or slag-tap, pulverized-coal boilers are designed to remove the ash as a flowing slag. These boilers depend on lower ash-fusion temperature coals so that the ash will melt to form slag for easier removal.

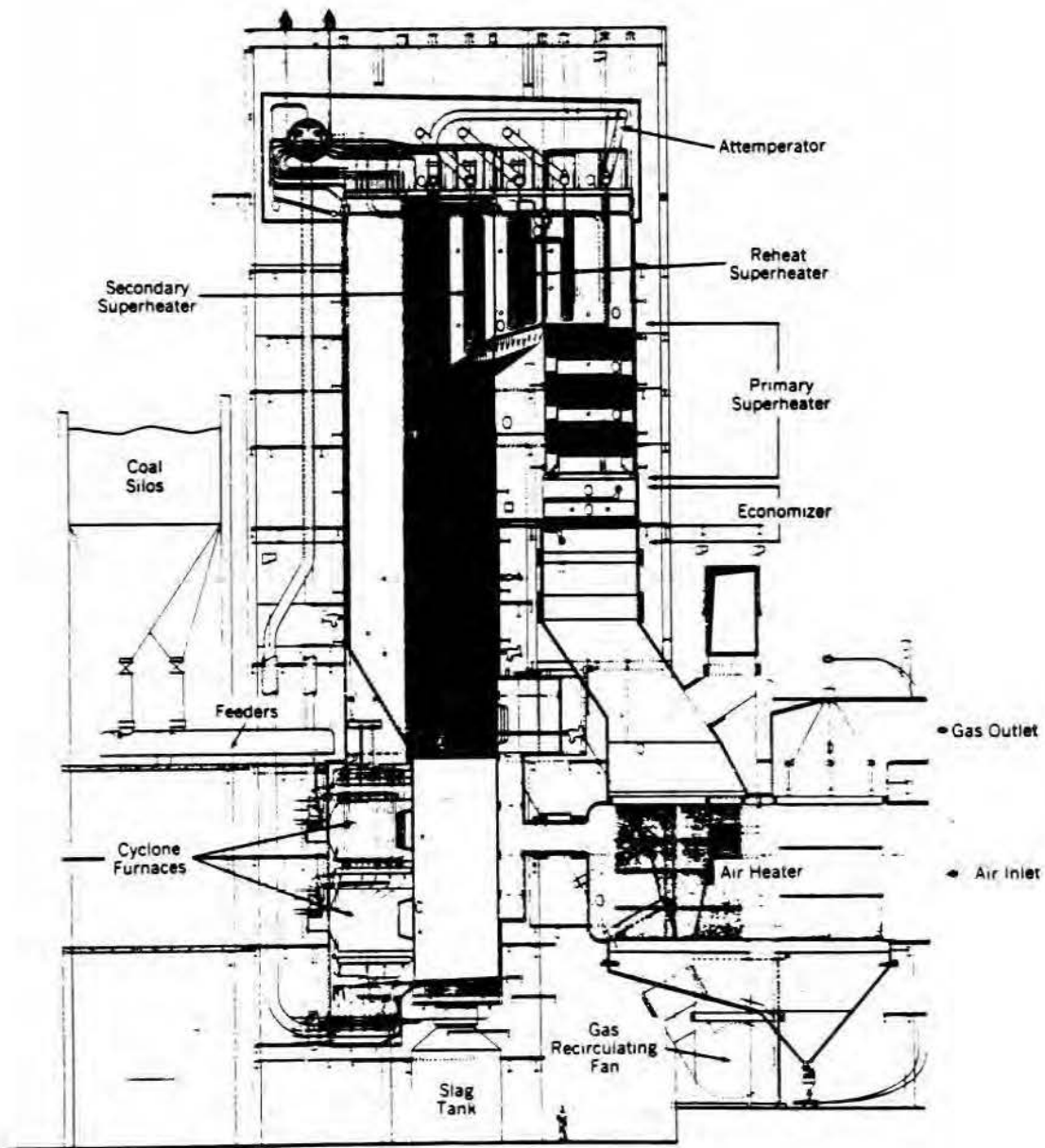
#### **2.3.2.2 Cyclones**

The cyclone furnace consists of a water-cooled horizontal furnace in which crushed coal is fired and heat is released at high rates, as shown in Exhibit 2-13. The temperature inside the furnace may reach 3000°F, which is sufficient to melt the ash into a liquid slag that forms on the walls of the furnace. Air circulation within the furnace typically creates a cyclone-like vortex that not only helps the coal to burn in suspension but also causes many coal particles to impinge upon the slag-covered walls of the furnace. This tendency for coal particles to adhere to the walls of the cyclone boiler aids the combustion process because the coal particles will burn more thoroughly before reaching the bottom of the boiler. Most of the ash is retained in the slag layer, thus minimizing the amount of fly ash that is carried out of the boiler. The slag,



## EXHIBIT 2-13

## DIAGRAM OF A CYCLONE BOILER



Source: Babcock and Wilcox Co., Steam: Its Generation and Use, New York, NY, 1978.

or melted ash particles, is typically removed at the bottom of the furnace.

The cyclone offers the advantage of being able to burn low ash-fusion coals that create problems when burned in most conventional pulverized-coal burners. The cyclone design also helps to minimize erosion and fouling problems in the boiler. The smaller amounts of fly ash created compared to other boiler types reduces the costs associated with particulate collection.

### 2.3.2.3 Stokers

Stokers are designed to mechanically feed coal uniformly onto a grate within a furnace. Because most of the combustion takes place in the fuel bed, not in suspension within the furnace, the heat release rate of this type of boiler is lower than it is for pulverizers or cyclones. As a result, stokers are generally designed for smaller-sized applications. In fact, this boiler type is used by many manufacturing industries, but has seen only limited use by electric utilities.

Stokers are classified by the method of feeding fuel to the furnace and by the type of grate. The three most important stoker types include:

- 1) the spreader stoker, the most popular type of overfeed stoker,
- 2) other overfeed stokers, such as the chain-grate, travelling-grate stoker, or the vibrating-grate stoker, and
- 3) the underfeed stoker.

The major features of each are summarized in Exhibit 2-14. An illustration of a spreader stoker is provided in Exhibit 2-15.

Use of the different boiler types varies by geographic region. As shown in Exhibit 2-16, about three-fourths of all boiler capacity in the U.S. uses pulverizers, with most of these dry-bottom pulverizers. Cyclones are the next most prevalent boiler type, representing only about 8 percent of all boilers. Stokers represent less than one-half of one percent of the total; due to their size limitations stokers are used primarily in other industrial applications for the production of steam.

Exhibit 2-17 shows the distribution of average capacity for each boiler type by EPA region. The range in average sizes is most pronounced in dry bottom boilers (127.8-610.0 MW), which reflects their substantial flexibility in terms of size and dominance in electric utility applications. Stokers tend to have the smallest capacities (an average of 14 MW nationwide), limiting their usefulness in utility applications compared to all of the other boiler types.

#### **2.4 COAL CONSTITUENTS AND BY-PRODUCTS**

Despite its attractiveness as a power plant fuel, coal has its drawbacks. As a solid fuel, coal is often more difficult and more costly to transport, store, and burn than oil or gas. Also, coal's many impurities require environmental control at various stages of the fuel cycle.

## EXHIBIT 2-14

## CHARACTERISTICS OF VARIOUS TYPES OF STOKERS

| <u>Stoker Type &amp; Subclass</u>  | <u>Typical Maximum<br/>Capacity Range<br/>(pph steam) a/</u> | <u>Burning Rate<br/>(Btu/hr/ft<sup>2</sup>) b/</u> | <u>Characteristics</u>  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 1. Spreader                        |  |  | Capable of burning a wide range of coals, best ability to follow fluctuating loads, high fly ash carry over, low load smoke.  |
| - Stationary and dumping grate     | 20,000-80,000  | 450,000  |   |
| - Travelling grate                 | 100,000-400,000  | 750,000  |   |
| - Vibrating grate                  | 20,000-100,000   | 400,000  |   |
| 2. Overfeed                        |  |  | Characteristics similar to vibrating-grate stokers except these stokers experience difficulty in burning strongly caking coals                                      |
| - Chain grate and travelling grate | 20,000-100,000   | 600,000  |   |
| - Vibrating grate                  | 30,000-150,000   | 400,000  | Low maintenance, low fly ash carry over, capable of burning wide variety of weakly caking coals, smokeless operation over entire range.                             |
| 3. Underfeed                       |  |  | Capable of burning caking coals and a wide range of coals (including anthracite), high maintenance, low fly ash carry over, suitable for continuous-load operation. |
| - Single or double retort          | 20,000-30,000  | 400,000  |   |
| - Multiple retort                  |  |  |   |

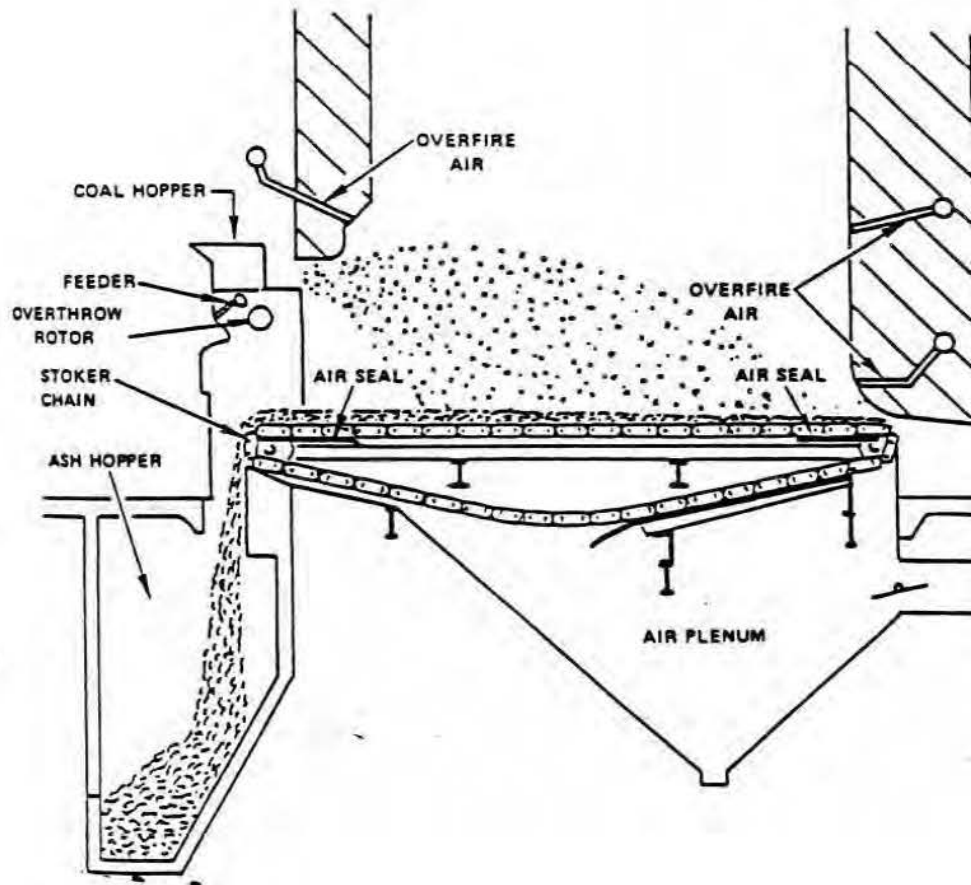
a/ pph = pounds steam/hr; 1 pph = 1000 Btu/hr.

b/ Maximum amount of Btus consumed per hour for each square foot of grate in the stoker.

Source: Meyers, Robert A. (Ed.), Coal Handbook, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, NY, 1981.

## EXHIBIT 2-15

## DIAGRAM OF A SPREADER STOKER



Source: Meyers, Robert A. (Ed.), Coal Handbook, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, NY, 1981.

## EXHIBIT 2-16

TOTAL COAL BOILER CAPACITY BY EPA REGION  
(%)

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Pulverizers</u> |                   | <u>Cyclone</u> | <u>Stoker</u> | <u>Other a/</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                   | <u>Dry Bottom</u>  | <u>Wet Bottom</u> |                |               |                 |              |
| 1                 | 69.2               | 11.3              | 16.7           | 0.0           | 2.8             | 100.0        |
| 2                 | 60.6               | 19.4              | 5.0            | 2.7           | 12.2            | 100.0        |
| 3                 | 87.6               | 0.3               | 2.8            | 0.0           | 9.2             | 100.0        |
| 4                 | 71.6               | 5.3               | 5.2            | 0.1           | 17.7            | 100.0        |
| 5                 | 70.4               | 4.9               | 14.0           | 0.5           | 10.1            | 100.0        |
| 6                 | 48.6               | 12.5              | 0.0            | 0.0           | 38.9            | 100.0        |
| 7                 | 58.3               | 3.5               | 19.2           | 1.0           | 18.0            | 100.0        |
| 8                 | 60.3               | 5.4               | 10.6           | 1.1           | 22.5            | 100.0        |
| 9                 | 77.5               | 0.0               | 0.0            | 0.0           | 22.5            | 100.0        |
| 10                | <u>100.0</u>       | <u>0.0</u>        | <u>0.0</u>     | <u>0.0</u>    | <u>0.0</u>      | <u>100.0</u> |
| U.S. Total        | 69.3               | 5.3               | 8.3            | 0.4           | 16.7            | 100.0        |

a/ Includes unknown, or other boiler types.

Source: ICF Coal and Utilities Information System Database.



## EXHIBIT 2-17

AVERAGE COAL BOILER SIZE BY TYPE OF BOILER  
AND BY EPA REGION  
(MW)

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Pulverizers</u> |                   | <u>Cyclone</u> | <u>Stoker</u> |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
|                   | <u>Dry Bottom</u>  | <u>Wet Bottom</u> |                |               |
| 1                 | 210.2              | 102.7             | 228.0          | N/A           |
| 2                 | 127.8              | 137.7             | 143.5          | 39.0          |
| 3                 | 297.6              | 136.0             | 195.3          | N/A           |
| 4                 | 249.3              | 147.4             | 342.6          | 14.6          |
| 5                 | 185.0              | 117.0             | 222.6          | 11.2          |
| 6                 | 522.7              | 489.0             | N/A            | N/A           |
| 7                 | 162.5              | 148.3             | 243.2          | 12.3          |
| 8                 | 234.2              | 141.7             | 322.8          | 17.9          |
| 9                 | 388.3              | N/A               | N/A            | N/A           |
| 10                | <u>610.0</u>       | <u>N/A</u>        | <u>N/A</u>     | <u>N/A</u>    |
| U.S. Total        | 231.8              | 162.9             | 243.2          | 14.0          |

N/A = Not applicable.

Source: ICF Coal and Utilities Information System Database.

These impurities are typically referred to as "ash", whether the reference is to some of the constituents that compose the coal itself prior to combustion or the waste products that result from its combustion. Some coal ash is inherent to the coal seam, while other ash comes from non-coal strata near the coal seam which are intermixed during mining. The coal consumed by electric utilities is generally over 10 percent ash.<sup>24</sup> At current rates of coal consumption, about 70 million tons of ash pass through coal-fired power plants each year.<sup>25</sup>

The ash generated at utility power plants is produced inside the boiler furnace from the inorganic components as the organic components of the coal combust. The types of ash produced can vary -- some ash is swept through the furnace with the hot flue gases to form fly ash, while some settles to the bottom of the boiler as bottom ash or slag. The amount of each type of ash produced depends upon the boiler configuration as described in Section 2.3 and the characteristics of the coal (see Chapter Three for further discussion of ash types).

Air quality regulations have long restricted the amount of fly ash that may be released through a power plant's stacks. Primarily through the use of electrostatic precipitators or bag houses, power plants collect fly ash particles, leaving the flue gases nearly particulate-free as they are emitted from the stack. As a result, the fly ash, bottom ash, and slag that is collected during and after combustion is approximately equal to the amount of ash in the coal prior to combustion.

For many power plants constructed since the 1970's, additional environmental controls also require that a portion of the sulfur oxides be removed from the flue gases. The dominant technology for removing sulfur oxides is known as flue gas desulfurization (FGD), in which alkaline agents, usually in liquid slurry form, are mixed with the flue gases to convert the sulfur into non-gaseous compounds. The resulting waste product is generally referred to as FGD sludge and can amount to 25 percent or more of the volume of coal consumed at a given plant.<sup>26</sup> In total, U.S. coal-fired power plants produce about 85 million tons of ash and FGD sludge per year. By the end of the century, this volume is expected to approximately double.

Exhibit 2-18 shows the number of coal-fired utility power plants and units that produce FGD wastes in each EPA region as of 1985. Regions 6, 8, and 9 have the highest proportion of both plants and units producing FGD wastes. For example, more than half of the coal-fired units in region 9 produce FGD wastes. The high proportion of FGD-producing plants in these regions is in part attributable to the fact that many of the coal-fired plants in these regions are relatively new and were required to incorporate scrubbers to meet air emission regulations.

Plants and units producing FGD waste represent a smaller percentage in other regions, primarily because these regions relied on coal-fired capacity for a major portion of their generation before units with FGD technology were installed. For example, the absolute number of both plants and units producing FGD waste is greatest in Region 4, reflecting this area's reliance on coal for generating electricity.

## EXHIBIT 2-18

## ELECTRIC UTILITY PRODUCTION OF FGD WASTES: 1985

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u># of Plants<br/>Producing<br/>FGD waste</u> | <u>Percent of<br/>Plants Producing<br/>FGD Wastes</u> | <u># of Units<br/>Producing<br/>FGD Wastes</u> | <u>Percent of<br/>Units Producing<br/>FGD Wastes</u> |
|-------------------|--|---|--|--|
| 1                 | 0  | 0.0   | 0  | 0.0  |
| 2                 | 3  | 17.6  | 3  | 7.9  |
| 3                 | 5  | 8.8   | 13   | 9.4  |
| 4                 | 11   | 12.0  | 26   | 9.8  |
| 5                 | 10   | 5.8   | 16   | 3.6  |
| 6                 | 8  | 20.5  | 23   | 35.9   |
| 7                 | 6  | 9.1   | 11   | 7.9  |
| 8                 | 9  | 18.8  | 25   | 29.4   |
| 9                 | 3  | 23.1  | 12   | 57.1   |
| 10                | <u>0</u>                                       | <u>0.0</u>  | <u>0</u>                                       | <u>0.0</u>   |
| Total U.S.        | 55   | 12.0  | 129  | 14.4   |

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Source: Utility Data Institute Power Statistics Database.

Regions 1 and 10, at the other extreme, have no plants or units producing FGD wastes. These regions (New England and the Pacific Northwest) are not highly dependent upon coal and consequently, have relatively few coal-fired plants.

Numerous other types of wastes are produced during normal operation and maintenance at coal-fired power plants. These include, among others, boiler blowdown, coal pile runoff, cooling tower blowdown, demineralizer regenerants and rinses, metal and boiler cleaning wastes, pyrites, and sump effluents. These wastes are usually small in volume relative to ash and FGD sludge, but because they may have higher concentrations of certain constituents that may cause environmental concern, they also require care in handling and disposal. All of these wastes are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.





## CHAPTER TWO

### NOTES

- 1 Edison Electric Institute, 1985 Statistical Yearbook.
- 2 Energy Information Administration, Annual Energy Outlook 1985, DOE/EIA-0383(85), p. 50.
- 3 A gigwatt-hour (Gwh) is one million kilowatt-hours; a kilowatt-hour is the amount of electricity generated by 1 kilowatt of electric generating capacity operating for one hour.
- 4 Energy Information Administration, Annual Outlook for U.S. Electric Power, DOE/EIA-0474(86), 1986.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 The major portion of this discussion is taken from Annual Outlook for U.S. Electric Power, DOE/EIA, 1986. See this document for further information.
- 17 Ibid., page 5.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Annual 1984, DOE/EIA-0348(84), p. 24.

22 Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Monthly, DOE/EIA-0226(85/12), December 1985, p. 21.

23 For more detail, see Meyers, Robert A. (Ed.), Coal Handbook, Marcel Dekker, Inc., New York, New York, 1981, pp. 378-431.

24 Energy Information Administration, Cost and Quality of Fuels for Electric Utility Plants 1984, DOE/EIA-0191(84), July 1985, p. 6.

25 American Coal Ash Association.

26 For example, a coal with 2 percent sulfur would produce approximately 80 pounds sulfur dioxide per ton of coal consumed. A limestone scrubber capturing 90 percent of the sulfur dioxide, assuming a stoichiometric ratio of 1.4 and a sludge moisture content of 50 percent, would produce almost 500 pounds of FGD sludge per ton of coal consumed. See Appendix B for a detailed discussion of the methodologies used to determine this calculation.

## CHAPTER THREE

### WASTES GENERATED FROM COAL-FIRED ELECTRIC UTILITY POWER PLANTS

As part of EPA's responsibility under Section 8002(n) of RCRA, Congress directed that the study of wastes from the combustion of fossil fuels should include an analysis of "the source and volumes of such material generated per year." In response to this directive, this chapter examines the physical and chemical characteristics of the types and quantities of wastes that are generated currently and likely to be generated in the future.

#### 3.1 OVERVIEW OF ELECTRIC UTILITY WASTES

As discussed initially in Chapter Two, the noncombustible material that remains after coal is burned is called ash. The proportion of noncombustible material in coal is referred to as the ash content. There are four basic types of wastes that can be produced directly from coal combustion: fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and flue gas desulfurization (FGD) sludge. The smaller ash particles entrained by the flue (exhaust) gas are referred to as fly ash and are produced in varying degrees by all plants. Larger ash particles that settle on the bottom of the boiler will form either bottom ash (if the particles have never completely melted) or boiler slag (if the ash particles have melted), depending on the furnace design. Another waste product, called FGD sludge, is generated when some of the sulfur dioxide (formed when the sulfur present in the coal combines with oxygen during combustion) is removed from other flue gases. This removal process is required by the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1979, which revised the New Source

Performance Standards for any electric utility boiler constructed after September 1978. These plants are required to remove 90 percent of the sulfur dioxide, which is usually accomplished with a flue gas desulfurization (FGD, or scrubber) system. Because they are generated in very large quantities, these four waste materials -- fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and FGD sludge -- are referred to by the industry as high-volume wastes. This term will be used throughout this study to be consistent with the terminology that is commonly used for these wastes.

Electric utility power plants also generate waste streams that the industry typically calls low-volume wastes, which are formed during equipment maintenance and water purification processes. Types of low-volume wastes generated by coal-fired power plants include boiler blowdown, coal pile runoff, cooling tower blowdown, demineralizer regenerants and rinses, metal and boiler cleaning wastes, pyrites, and sump effluents. Because it is common industry terminology, the term "low-volume wastes" will be used throughout this report; however, some of these wastes (such as cooling tower blowdown) can be generated in substantial quantities, although generally in smaller quantities than high-volume wastes.

The remainder of this chapter describes each type of high-volume and low-volume waste stream, the various methods of collection used for each, the volumes produced, and the physical and chemical characteristics that determine the waste's behavior during disposal and its potential to leach.

## **3.2 HIGH-VOLUME WASTES**

High-volume coal combustion utility wastes are those waste streams generated in the boiler furnace -- fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag -- and in the cleaning of coal combustion flue gas. The following sections describe the volumes and the physical and chemical characteristics of these high-volume waste streams.

### **3.2.1 Ash**

The noncombustible waste material that remains after coal is burned is referred to as ash. Some noncombustible materials are characteristic of the coal itself, originating from the chemical elements in the plants from which the coal was formed. These materials generally account for no more than two percent of the ash content of the coal. Other noncombustible materials extraneous to the coal, such as minerals lodged in the coal seam during or after its geologic formation and rocks near the coal seam that are carried away with the coal during mining, are burned during the fuel combustion process along with the coal itself. These materials account for most of the ash content.

#### **3.2.1.1 How Ash is Generated**

The type of ash produced from a boiler is determined by the type of coal that is burned and the design of the boiler furnace. As discussed in Chapter Two, the major types of boilers used by electric utilities are wet-bottom pulverizers, dry-bottom pulverizers, cyclone-fired boilers, and stokers.

Pulverizers are the most widely used boilers in the electric utility industry because they can burn many different types of coal. Due to the very fine consistency of the coal after it is pulverized, the ash particles are easily carried out of the boiler along with the flue gases, resulting in a relatively large proportion of fly ash.

The amount of fly ash that accumulates in a pulverizer depends on whether it is dry-bottom or wet-bottom.<sup>1</sup> In dry-bottom pulverizers, which constitute the majority of electric utility boilers, ash particles in the coal generally do not melt during the combustion process because the ash fusion temperature (i.e., the melting point) is higher than the operating temperature in the boiler. In dry-bottom pulverizers, therefore, about 80 percent of the fine ash remains in the flue gas as fly ash. The remaining ash settles to the bottom of the boiler (hence the term bottom ash) where it is collected at a later time. In wet-bottom pulverizers, about 50 percent of the ash exits the boiler as fly ash, while the other 50 percent remains in the furnace. However, ash particles that remain in wet-bottom pulverizers become molten; this boiler slag remains in a molten state until it is drained from the boiler bottom.

Cyclone-fired boilers burn larger-sized coal particles than do pulverizers, since partial crushing is the only preparation required prior to injection into the furnace. The amount of fly ash that is generated in a cyclone boiler is less than that generated in a pulverizer because of the larger-sized coal particles and the design of the cyclone boiler. Because the air circulation within the boiler furnace is designed to create a cyclone-like



vortex, the coal particles have a tendency to contact the boiler walls. The operating temperature is high enough to melt the ash so that it adheres to the furnace walls as liquid slag. Excess slag continually drains to the bottom of the furnace, where it is removed for disposal. Only 20 to 30 percent of the ash formed in a cyclone boiler leaves the boiler as fly ash.

A few older and smaller power plants have stoker-type boilers, in which coal is burned on or immediately over a grate in the furnace. Stokers are designed to burn coals that do not contain too many small particles (fines), which can tend to smother the fire. Because there are fewer small particles, the amount of fly ash is reduced. For example, in a spreader stoker, the most common type of stoker boiler, the coal is uniformly fed over the fire in a manner that enables suspension burning of the finer pieces, while heavier pieces of coal fall onto the grate for further combustion. The large amount of coal that is burned on the grate reduces the amount of fly ash; the ash produced in a spreader stoker is generally about 50 percent fly ash and 50 percent bottom ash.

#### **3.2.1.2 Methods of Ash Collection**

As the flue gas leaves the boiler, it is passed through a mechanical ash collector to remove some of the fly ash particles. A mechanical ash collector operates by exerting centrifugal force on the fly ash particles, throwing them to the outside wall of the collector where they can be removed. These collectors are effective mainly for capturing the larger fly ash particles. To remove the smaller particles, the flue gas must then pass through some

other type of particulate control device, such as an electrostatic precipitator, a baghouse, or a wet scrubber.

The electrostatic precipitator (ESP) is the most common device for fine ash collection. ESPs operate by applying an electrical charge to the fly ash particles. In the presence of an intense electrical field, the charged particles are attracted to a grounded collection electrode. The collected dust is then discharged to a storage hopper by a process called rapping that dislodges the collected particles. ESPs are most efficient when coal with high sulfur content is used because the sulfur dioxide in the flue gas helps retain the electrical charge. When properly designed and maintained, an ESP is capable of collecting over 99 percent of the ash present in the flue gas.<sup>2</sup>

When coal with lower sulfur content is burned, baghouses (also called fabric filters) are often more appropriate to use as fly ash collection devices. If operated efficiently, they also can remove over 99 percent of the ash from the flue gas.<sup>3</sup> In this system, the flue gas passes through a filter that traps the ash particles. The ash builds up on the filter, forming a filter cake. As this process continues, the ash collection efficiency tends to increase as it becomes more difficult for particles to pass through the filter material. Periodically, the cake is dislodged from the filters, which reduces efficiency until buildup occurs again.

Some power plants remove fly ash by the wet scrubbing method, in which liquids are used to collect the ash. In one method, the ash particles are removed from the flue gas stream by contacting them with a scrubbing liquid in a spray tower. This process forms an ash slurry, which is then discharged.

Alternatively, fly ash particles may be dislodged from the walls of the scrubber by a liquid flushing of the scrubber. Because the operation of a scrubber is very plant-specific, the collection efficiency of wet scrubbers varies, though wet scrubbers are generally not as efficient as ESPs and baghouses. The advantage of wet scrubbers, however, is that they can also be used simultaneously to collect sulfur oxides from the flue gas system.

Ash particles that do not escape as fly ash become bottom ash or boiler slag. In dry-bottom pulverizers and stokers, the temperatures are low enough to allow the molten ash to cool and reform into dry, solid ash particles, or bottom ash. In smaller boilers of this type, the ash falls onto a grate, which then is opened, allowing the ash to drop into a flat-bottom hopper. The large quantities of bottom ash produced in larger boilers often require hoppers with sloped sides for self-feeding. Some hoppers may contain water to quench the ash and to facilitate disposal.

In cyclone-fired boilers and wet-bottom pulverizers, the liquified ash particles that fall to the bottom of the boiler during combustion remain in a molten state and coalesce into large masses (called slag), which then drop onto the boiler floor. The slag is tapped into a water-filled hopper, or slag tank, which is periodically emptied and the slag disposed. Slag tanks for cyclone-fired boilers are similar to those used for pulverizers but have a higher relative capacity because a greater percentage of the ash in cyclones becomes boiler slag.

### 3.2.1.3 Quantities of Ash Generated

Nearly all of the noncombustible material in coal ends up as fly ash, bottom ash, or boiler slag. As mentioned earlier, the coal industry and the electric utility industry refer to this material as a coal's ash content. As a result, the volume of ash generated is directly related to the amount of coal consumed and the ash content of the coal. The ash content of coal will vary according to several factors, including coal-producing region, coal rank (i.e., bituminous, subbituminous, anthracite, or lignite), mine, seam, and production method. Although the proportion of ash in coal may range from 3 to 30 percent, the industry-wide average for electric utility power plants is 10.1 percent.<sup>4</sup> Exhibit 3-1 shows the average ash content of coal that was delivered to coal-fired power plants in 1985 for some of the major coal-producing regions.

In 1984, electric utilities generated about 69 million tons of coal ash. Ash generation is expected to increase considerably, to about 120 million tons in the year 2000, an increase of about 72 percent over 1984 levels. This increase can primarily be attributed to the increase in the demand for coal by electric utilities. While there is some uncertainty over the amount of coal that will be consumed by electric utility power plants, coal-fired electricity generation is likely to increase significantly. For example, one estimate indicates that by the year 2000 electric utility power plants will burn over one billion tons of coal to meet 61 percent of total electricity demand,<sup>5</sup> an increase of 70 percent over the 664 million tons consumed in 1984.<sup>6</sup> Exhibit 3-2 shows historical and forecasted future ash generation by coal-fired electric power plants.

## EXHIBIT 3-1

REPRESENTATIVE ASH CONTENTS BY PRODUCING  
REGION AND COAL RANK: 1985

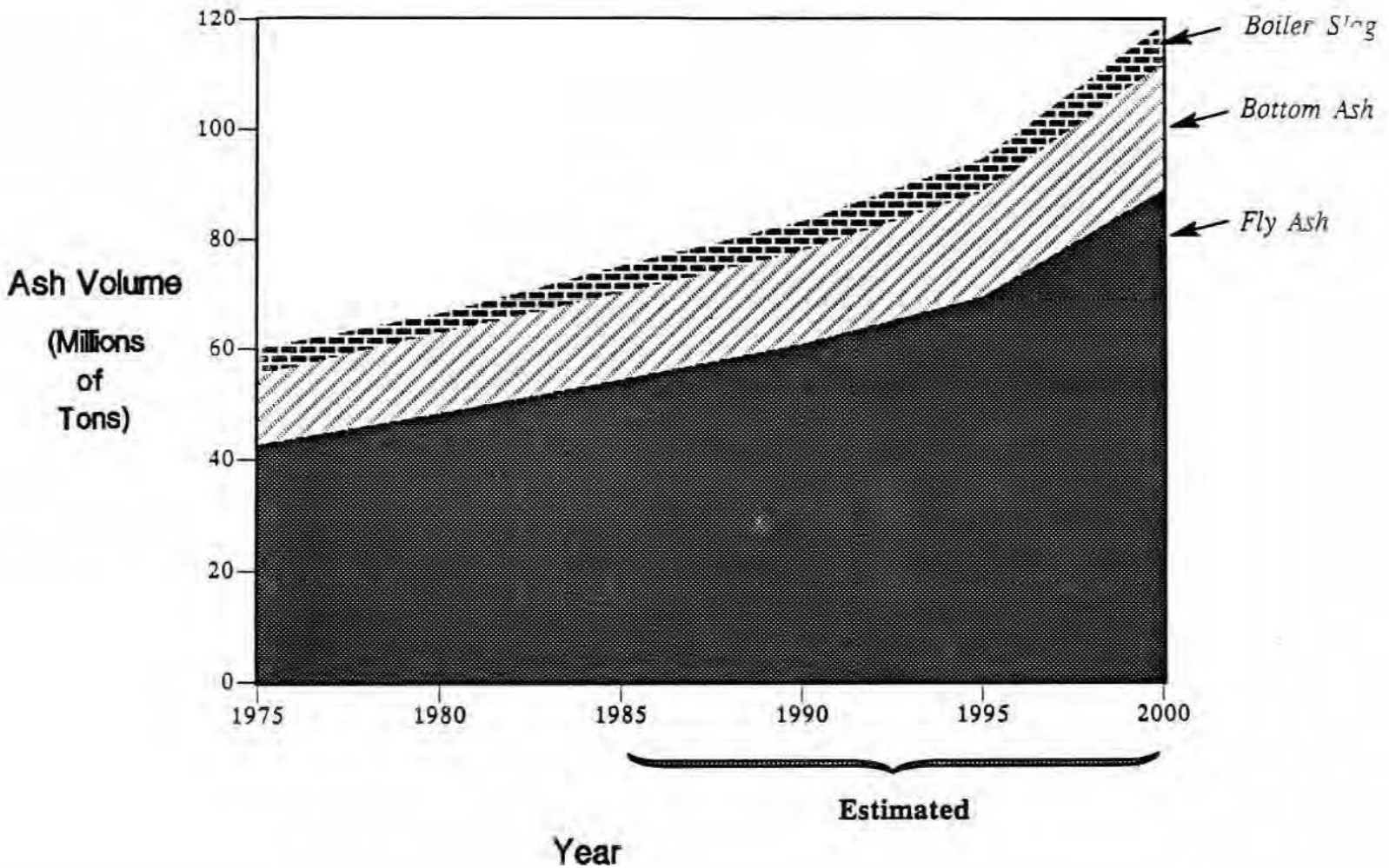
| <u>Coal Rank and Region</u> | <u>Percent Ash</u> |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Anthracite</u>           |                    |
| Northeastern Pennsylvania   | 29.4               |
| <u>Bituminous</u>           |                    |
| Western Pennsylvania        | 10.9               |
| Northern West Virginia      | 10.4               |
| Ohio                        | 11.3               |
| Eastern Kentucky            | 9.9                |
| Alabama                     | 12.2               |
| Illinois                    | 9.7                |
| Colorado                    | 6.2                |
| Utah                        | 9.4                |
| Arizona                     | 8.9                |
| <u>Subbituminous</u>        |                    |
| Wyoming                     | 5.9                |
| New Mexico                  | 18.8               |
| <u>Lignite</u>              |                    |
| Texas                       | 15.8               |
| North Dakota                | <u>9.0</u>         |
| U.S. Average                | 10.1               |

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Source: Energy Information Administration, Cost and Quality of Fuels for Electric Utility Plants 1985, DOE/EIA-0191(85), July 1986.

## EXHIBIT 3-2

VOLUME OF ASH GENERATED BY COAL-FIRED  
ELECTRIC UTILITY POWER PLANTS  
1975 - 2000



Sources: 1975-1984: American Coal Ash Association.  
1985-2000: ICF Incorporated. See Appendix B for in-depth discussion of the methodologies used to develop these estimates.

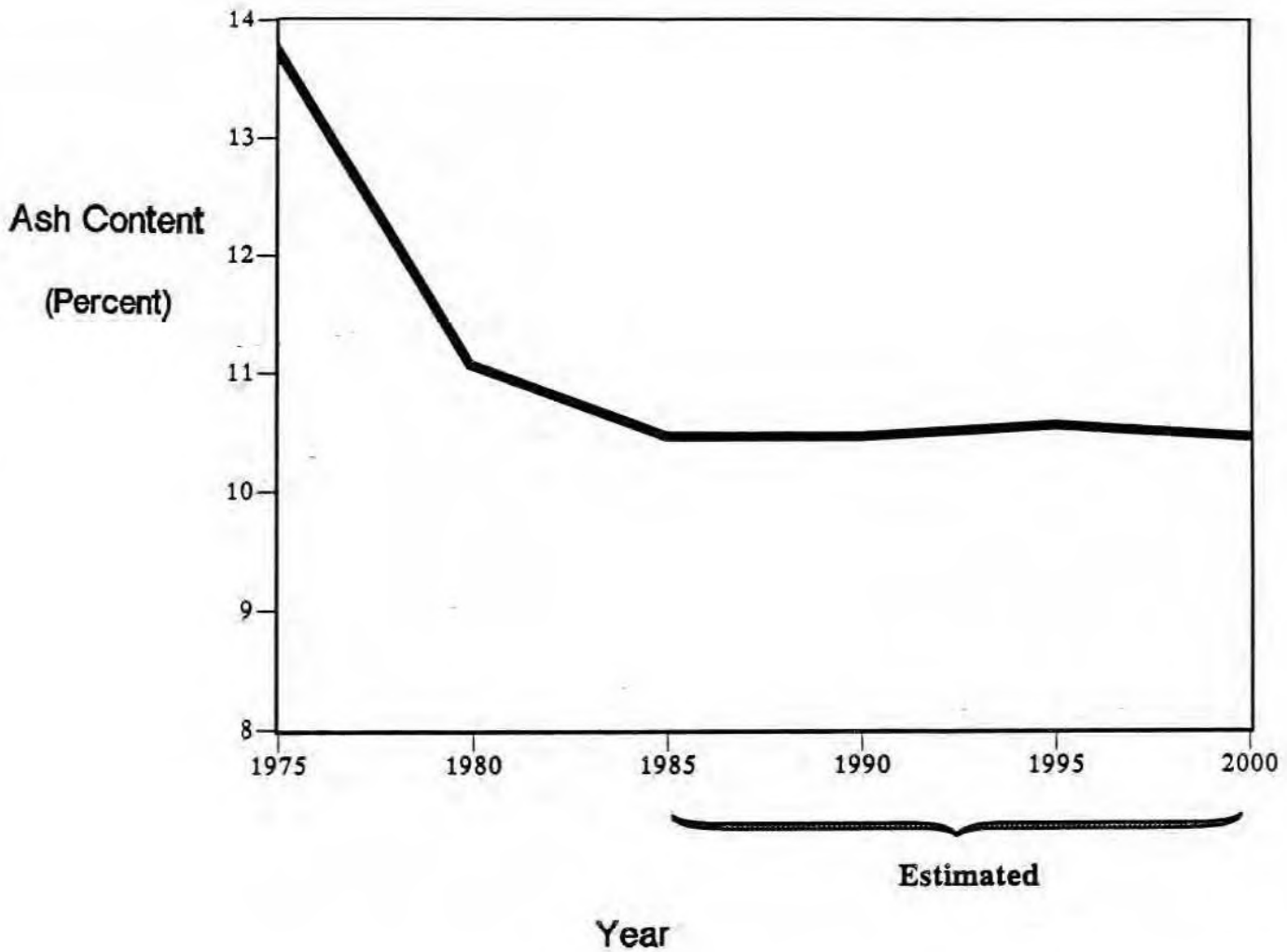


The average ash content of coal burned by electric utilities has declined from about 14 percent to slightly more than 10 percent over the past decade (see Exhibit 3-3). To meet particulate emission standards and to lower certain operating and maintenance costs, more electric utilities are now choosing to burn coal with lower ash contents. Although some coals are naturally low in ash, producers and/or utilities can also reduce ash content by cleaning the coal.<sup>7</sup> In some cases, cleaning can reduce ash content by as much as 50 to 70 percent. At present, utilities clean about 35 percent of all the coal they consume; most of the coal that is cleaned comes from eastern and midwestern underground bituminous coal-mining operations. Another reason for the increased use of coal with lower average ash content is the growth in Western coal production, particularly in the Powder River Basin area of Montana and Wyoming. These coals are naturally low in ash content, and little ash is extracted during the mining process.

The quantity of fly ash and bottom ash produced is likely to increase faster over time than the quantity of boiler slag because most new coal-fired plants will employ dry-bottom pulverizer boilers, which generate fly ash and bottom ash rather than boiler slag. Because dry-bottom pulverizers are capable of burning coal with a wide range of ash fusion temperatures,<sup>8</sup> they are able to burn a greater variety of coals compared with cyclone boilers and wet-bottom pulverizers. Another advantage of dry-bottom pulverizers is that they produce less nitrogen oxide emissions than do other boiler types, which enables electric utilities to meet requirements for nitrogen oxide emissions control more easily.

## EXHIBIT 3-3

AVERAGE ASH CONTENT OF COAL BURNED  
BY ELECTRIC UTILITY POWER PLANTS IN THE U.S.  
1975 - 2000



Source: 1975-1984: Energy Information Administration, Cost and Quality of Fuels for Electric Utility Plants.  
1985-2000: ICF Incorporated. See Appendix B for in-depth discussion of the methodologies used to develop these estimates.

#### 3.2.1.4 Physical Characteristics of Ash

The physical characteristics of coal combustion ash of interest are particle size and distribution, compaction behavior, permeability, and shear strength. Exhibit 3-4 provides representative ranges of values for these characteristics of fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag.

The greater the assortment of particle sizes in the material, the more it can be compacted to achieve greater density and shear strength and lower permeability. Generally, fly ash is similar in size to silt. Most fly ash particles are between 5 and 100 microns in diameter; within a single sample, the largest particles may be 200 times larger than the smallest particles.<sup>9</sup> The size of bottom ash and boiler slag particles can range from that of fine sand to fine gravel, or about 0.1 to 10 millimeters.<sup>10</sup>

Compaction behavior refers to the amount of settling that takes place after disposal and the rate at which such settling occurs. Compressibility, density, and moisture content are factors affecting compaction behavior.<sup>11</sup> When compacted and dry, most fly ash and bottom ash behave very similarly to cohesive soil.

Permeability reflects the rate at which water will seep through the waste material in a given period of time and provides a good first estimate of the rate and quantity of leachate migration. A number of factors can influence the degree of permeability, such as the size and shape of the waste particles, the degree of compaction, and the viscosity of the water. Properly compacted fly ash often has low permeability, similar to that of clay, while the

## EXHIBIT 3-4

**REPRESENTATIVE RANGES OF VALUES  
FOR THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF  
FLY ASH, BOTTOM ASH, AND BOILER SLAG**

|                                    | <u>Fly Ash</u>                     | <u>Bottom Ash/<br/>Boiler Slag</u> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Particle Size (mm)                 | 0.001-0.1                          | 0.1-10                             |
| Compaction Behavior:               |                                    |                                    |
| Compressibility (%)                | 1.8                                | 1.4                                |
| Dry Density (lbs/ft <sup>3</sup> ) | 80-90                              | 80-90                              |
| Permeability (cm/sec)              | 10 <sup>-6</sup> -10 <sup>-4</sup> | 10 <sup>-3</sup> -10 <sup>-1</sup> |
| Shear Strength                     |                                    |                                    |
| Cohesion (psi)                     | 0-170                              | 0                                  |
| Angle of Internal Friction (°)     | 25-45                              | 25-45                              |

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Sources: For compressibility values, Arthur D. Little, Full-Scale Field Evaluation of Waste Disposal from Coal-Fired Electric Generating Plants, Volume I, Prepared for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, June 1985, p. 3-29. For other values, Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, Prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, p. 3-3 - 3-8.

permeability of bottom ash is usually slightly higher. Boiler slag is higher still, having a permeability comparable to that of fine gravel.

Shear strength is an important determinant of the shape and structural stability of wastes disposed in landfills; a strong material (i.e., one with high shear strength) can form steep slopes and support heavy loads from above. Two indicators of shear strength are cohesion, a measure of the attraction between particles due to electrostatic forces, and the angle of internal friction, an indicator of the friction between particles. Dry, nonalkaline ash has no cohesion. Dry ash that is alkaline demonstrates some cohesion and, when compacted, increases in strength over time. The angle of internal friction associated with ash varies with the degree of compaction, although it is similar to that for clean, graded sand.

#### **3.2.1.5 Chemical Characteristics of Ash**

The chemical composition of ash is a function of the type of coal that is burned, the extent to which the coal is prepared before it is burned, and the operating conditions of the boiler. These factors are very plant- and coal-specific.

In general, over 95 percent of ash is made up of silicon, aluminum, iron, and calcium in their oxide forms. Magnesium, potassium, sodium, and titanium are also present to a lesser degree. Exhibit 3-5 shows the concentration of these major elements typically found in fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag.

Ash also contains many other elements in much smaller quantities. The types and proportions of these trace elements are highly variable and not

## EXHIBIT 3-5

**LOW AND HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF MAJOR CHEMICAL  
CONSTITUENTS FOUND IN ASH GENERATED  
BY COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS  
(parts per million)**

|           | <u>Fly Ash</u> |             | <u>Bottom Ash/Boiler Slag</u> |             |
|-----------|----------------|-------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
|           | <u>Low</u>     | <u>High</u> | <u>Low</u>                    | <u>High</u> |
| Aluminum  | 11,500         | 144,000     | 88,000                        | 135,000     |
| Calcium   | 5,400          | 177,100     | 8,400                         | 50,600      |
| Iron      | 7,800          | 289,000     | 27,000                        | 203,000     |
| Magnesium | 4,900          | 60,800      | 4,500                         | 32,500      |
| Potassium | 1,534          | 34,700      | 7,300                         | 15,800      |
| Silicon   | 196,000        | 271,000     | 180,000                       | 273,000     |
| Sodium    | 1,180          | 20,300      | 1,800                         | 13,100      |
| Titanium  | 400            | 15,900      | 3,300                         | 7,210       |

Source: Utility Solid Waste Activities Group, Report and Technical Studies on the Disposal and Utilization of Fossil-Fuel Combustion By-Products, Appendix A, Submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, October 26, 1982, p. 31.



readily categorized. Concentrations for various trace elements in coal ash are shown in Exhibit 3-6, which indicates the potential range of values and median concentration for such trace elements for coals from different regions of the U.S. A summary of how the concentration of elements in ash varies according to coal source is shown in Exhibit 3-7. For example, Eastern and Midwestern coal ashes usually contain greater amounts of arsenic, selenium, chromium, and vanadium than do Western coal ashes, while Western coals have larger proportions of barium and strontium. Coal mining and cleaning techniques can reduce the amount of trace elements that are ultimately found in the ash after combustion. For example, in some cases, coal cleaning can remove more than half of the sulfur, arsenic, lead, manganese, mercury, and selenium that is contained in the coal prior to combustion.

The proportions of elements contained in fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag can vary. Exhibit 3-8 provides ranges and median values for element concentrations in different types of ash -- bottom ash and/or boiler slag, and fly ash. The concentrations of elements formed in fly ash are shown for two types -- the larger particles removed from the flue gas by mechanical collection and the smaller particles removed with an electrostatic precipitator or a baghouse (see Section 3.2.1.2 for more detail on methods of ash collection). For example, much higher quantities of arsenic, copper, and selenium are found in fly ash than are found in bottom ash or boiler slag. The distribution of elements among the different types of ash is largely determined by the firing temperature of the boiler relative to the coal's ash fusion temperature, which in turn affects the proportions of volatile elements that end up in fly ash and bottom ash. Some elements, such as sulfur, mercury, and chlorine, are almost completely volatilized and leave the boiler

## EXHIBIT 3-6

**ELEMENT CONCENTRATIONS IN ASH FROM THREE GEOGRAPHIC SOURCES**  
**(milligrams per kilogram)\***

| <u>Element</u> | <u>Eastern Coal</u> |               | <u>Midwestern Coal</u> |               | <u>Western Coal</u> |               |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|
|                | <u>Range</u>        | <u>Median</u> | <u>Range</u>           | <u>Median</u> | <u>Range</u>        | <u>Median</u> |
| Arsenic        | 2.0-279             | 75            | 0.50-179               | 54            | 1.3-129             | 18            |
| Barium         | 52-2200             | 892           | 300-4300               | 905           | 300-5789            | 2700          |
| Boron          | 10.0-580            | 121           | 10-1300                | 870           | 41.9-1040           | 311           |
| Cadmium        | 0.10-8.24           | 1.59          | 0.50-18                | 2.6           | 0.10-14.3           | 1.01          |
| Chromium       | 34-437              | 165           | 70-395                 | 172           | 3.4-265             | 45            |
| Cobalt         | 6.22-79             | 40.6          | 19-70                  | 35.7          | 4.9-69              | 13.0          |
| Copper         | 3.7-349             | 136           | 20-330                 | 125           | 29-340              | 74.8          |
| Fluorine       | 0.40-89             | 8.8           | 3.2-300                | 75            | 0.40-320            | 50.1          |
| Lead           | 1.3-222             | 18.0          | 3.0-252                | 149           | 0.40-250            | 26.1          |
| Manganese      | 79-430              | 190           | 194-700                | 410           | 56.7-769            | 194           |
| Mercury        | 0.02-4.2            | 0.192         | 0.005-0.30             | 0.044         | 0.005-2.5           | 0.067         |
| Molybdenum     | 0.84-51             | 15.0          | 7.0-70                 | 43            | 1.4-100             | 12.0          |
| Nickel         | 6.6-258             | 78            | 26-253                 | 121           | 1.8-229             | 38.0          |
| Selenium       | 0.36-19.0           | 8.05          | 0.08-19                | 7.0           | 0.13-19.0           | 4.1           |
| Silver         | 0.25-8.0            | 0.695         | 0.10-1.20              | 0.39          | 0.040-6.0           | 0.26          |
| Strontium      | 59-2901             | 801           | 30-2240                | 423           | 931-3855            | 2300          |
| Thallium       | 7.0-28.0            | 25.0          | 2.0-42                 | 16.0          | 0.10-3.50           | 1.06          |
| Vanadium       | 110-551             | 269           | 100-570                | 270           | 11.9-340            | 94            |
| Zinc           | 16-1420             | 163           | 20-2300                | 600           | 4.0-854             | 71            |

\* Values shown are for all types of ash combined.

Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983.

## EXHIBIT 3-7

## EFFECT OF GEOGRAPHIC COAL SOURCE ON ASH ELEMENT CONCENTRATION

| <u>Element</u> | <u>Concentration Pattern</u>  |
|----------------|---|
| Arsenic        | low in western coal ash; eastern and midwestern coal ashes indistinguishable            |
| Barium         | highest in western coal ash   |
| Cadmium        | most concentrated in midwestern coal ash  |
| Chromium       | low in western coal ash; eastern and midwestern coal ashes indistinguishable            |
| Mercury        | highest in eastern coal ash; all distributions highly skewed toward high concentrations |
| Lead           | highest in midwestern coal ash  |
| Selenium       | similar in eastern and midwestern coal ash; lower in western coal ash                   |
| Strontium      | greater in eastern than in midwestern coal ash; greater still in western coal ash       |
| Vanadium       | similar in eastern and midwestern coal ash; lower in western coal ash                   |
| Zinc           | greater in eastern than in western coal ash; greater still in midwestern coal ash       |

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Source: Tetra Tech, Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, p. 3-30.

## EXHIBIT 3-8

**ELEMENT CONCENTRATIONS IN THREE TYPES OF ASH**  
(milligrams per kilogram)

| Element   | Fly Ash                |        |                       |        |              |        |
|-----------|------------------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|--------------|--------|
|           | Bottom Ash/Boiler Slag |        | Mechanical Hopper Ash |        | Fine Fly Ash |        |
|           | Range                  | Median | Range                 | Median | Range        | Median |
| Silver    | 0.1-.51                | 0.20   | 0.08-4.0              | 0.70   | 0.04-8.0     | 0.501  |
| Arsenic   | .50-168                | 4.45   | 3.3-160               | 25.2   | 2.3-279      | 56.7   |
| Boron     | 41.9-513               | 161    | 205-714               | 258    | 10.0-1300    | 371    |
| Barium    | 300-5789               | 1600   | 52-1152               | 872    | 110-5400     | 991    |
| Cadmium   | 0.1-4.7                | 0.86   | 0.40-14.3             | 4.27   | 0.10-18.0    | 1.60   |
| Cobalt    | 7.1-60.4               | 24     | 6.22-76.9             | 48.3   | 4.90-79.0    | 35.9   |
| Chromium  | 3.4-350                | 120    | 83.3-305              | 172    | 3.6-437      | 136    |
| Copper    | 3.7-250                | 68.1   | 42.0-326              | 130    | 33.0-349     | 116    |
| Fluorine  | 2.5-104                | 50.0   | 2.50-83.3             | 41.8   | 0.40-320     | 29.0   |
| Mercury   | 0.005-4.2              | 0.023  | 0.008-3.00            | 0.073  | 0.005-2.50   | 0.10   |
| Manganese | 56.7-769               | 297    | 123-430               | 191    | 24.5-750     | 250    |
| Lead      | 0.4-90.6               | 7.1    | 5.2-101               | 13.0   | 3.10-252     | 66.5   |
| Selenium  | .08-14                 | 0.601  | 0.13-11.8             | 5.52   | 0.60-19.0    | 9.97   |
| Strontium | 170-1800               | 800    | 396-2430              | 931    | 30.0-3855    | 775    |
| Vanadium  | 12.0-377               | 141    | 100-377               | 251    | 11.9-570     | 248    |
| Zinc      | 4.0-798                | 99.6   | 56.7-215              | 155    | 14.0-2300    | 210    |

Source: Tetra Tech, Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, p. 3-24.

in the flue gas rather than remaining in the bottom ash or boiler slag. Some of these more volatile elements may condense on the surface of the fly ash particles as the flue gas cools.

### 3.2.2 FGD Sludge

Another waste stream often generated in large volumes by coal-fired utility power plants is FGD sludge, which is created when utilities remove sulfur oxides from the flue gases. Emissions of sulfur oxides in the flue gases are due to the oxidation of sulfur during coal combustion. State and Federal regulations require power plants to control the amount of sulfur oxides released through the stack. To meet the applicable requirements most power plants use coals whose inherent sulfur content is low. If the sulfur content is so low that additional sulfur dioxide removal is not needed, then FGD sludge is not produced.

Present requirements for all new coal-fired plants, however, not only limit the amount of sulfur oxides that can be emitted, but also mandate a percentage reduction in the amount of sulfur dioxide emissions.<sup>12</sup> This requirement will substantially increase the number of sulfur dioxide control systems in use. The primary method of sulfur dioxide control currently available is a flue gas desulfurization (FGD) system through which the flue gases pass before being emitted from the stack. The wastes produced by this system are called FGD (scrubber) sludge. Other methods of control include newer technologies such as fluidized bed combustion (FBC) and limestone injection multistage burners (LIMB).<sup>13</sup> The technical and economic feasibility of the latter two technologies are currently under evaluation by private industry and the U.S.

Department of Energy. If these technologies do become more widely available, they also will produce substantial volumes of wastes.

#### **3.2.2.1 Methods of FGD Sludge Collection**

There are two major types of FGD (scrubber) systems. Non-recovery systems produce a waste material for disposal. Recovery systems produce recyclable by-products. Exhibit 3-9 illustrates the different types of FGD systems currently in use. Non-recovery systems, which account for 95 percent of the scrubber systems now in use by electric utilities, are further classified as wet or dry systems. In wet non-recovery scrubber systems, the flue gas contacts an aqueous solution of absorbents, thereby producing waste in a slurry form. The wastes generated by dry non-recovery systems contain no liquids.

Direct lime and limestone FGD systems are the most common wet non-recovery processes. With these systems, flue gases pass through a fly ash collection device and into a contact chamber where they react with a solution of lime or crushed limestone in the form of a slurry. The slurry circulates between the contact chamber and a separate reaction tank, where the reagents are added. From the reaction tank, the slurry is fed to a thickening and dewatering device to be prepared for disposal. After dewatering, the resulting liquid is recycled back to the reaction tank and the sludge solids are removed for disposal. Under certain conditions, direct lime and limestone scrubbers have been able to remove over 95 percent of the sulfur dioxide in the flue gas.<sup>14</sup>



## EXHIBIT 3-9

## MAJOR TYPES OF FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEMS

| Non-Recovery     |                           | Recovery        |                              |
|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Wet              | Dry                       | Wet             | Dry                          |
| Direct Lime      | Spray Drying              | Wellman-Lord    | Alumina/Copper*<br>Sorbent   |
| Direct Limestone | Dry Sorbent<br>Injection* | Magnesium Oxide | Activated Carbon*<br>Sorbent |
| Alkaline Fly Ash |                           |                 |                              |
| Dual-Alkali      |                           |                 |                              |

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\*Systems are currently in development and testing phases, and are not as yet being used commercially.

Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, Prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, pp. 4-1 - 4-4.

A variation on the direct lime and limestone systems is the alkaline fly ash scrubber. Several western power plants that burn coal containing high-alkaline ash use these systems, which can improve sulfur dioxide removal. Rather than being collected by a separate upstream device (such as an ESP or baghouse), fly ash particles remain in the gas stream as it passes through the scrubber. In the scrubber, the alkaline fly ash, augmented with an alkaline lime/limestone slurry, acts to remove sulfur oxides. Alkaline fly ash scrubbers are not as efficient as direct lime and limestone systems, removing on average only about 40 percent of the sulfur dioxide.<sup>15</sup>

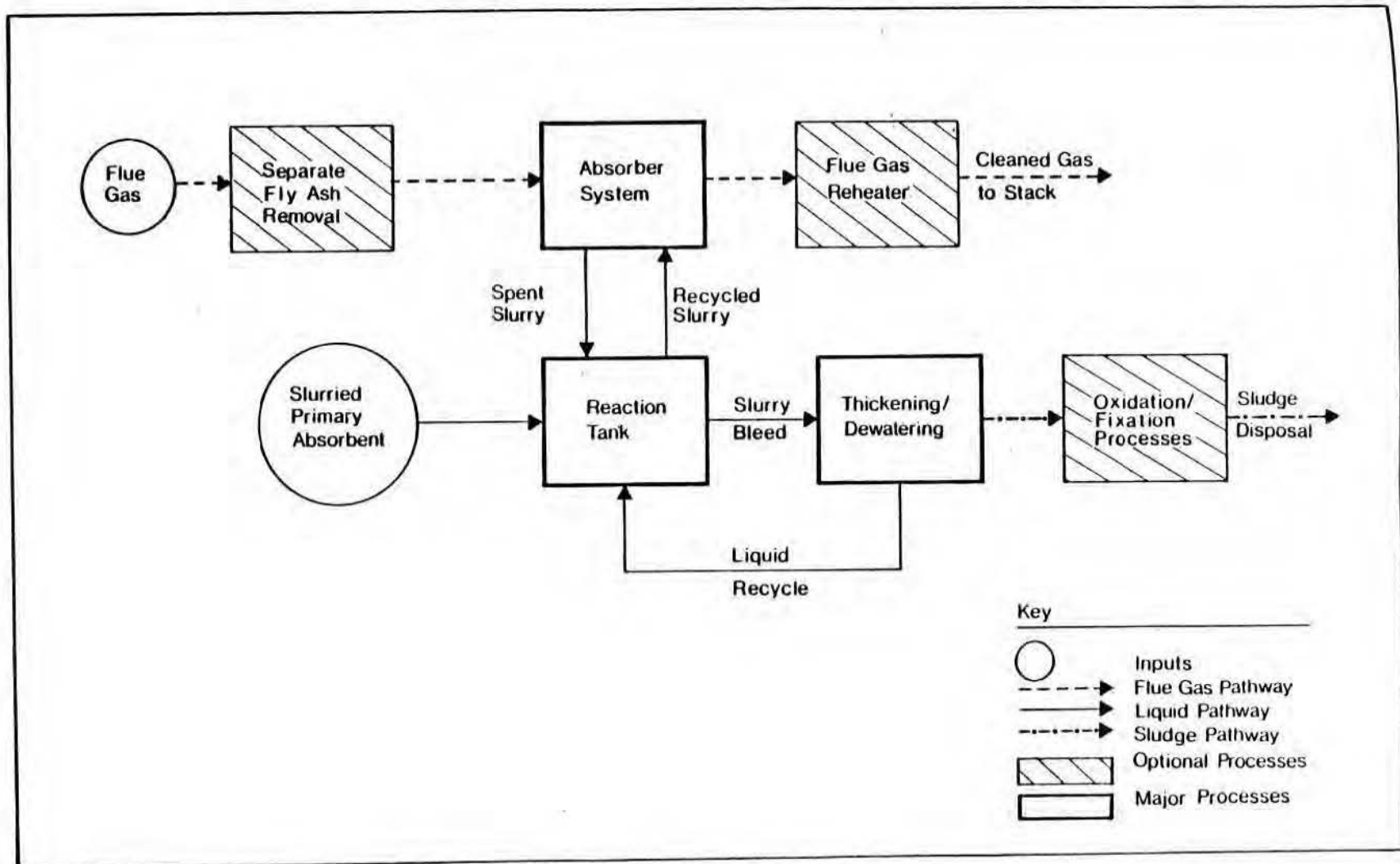
Another wet non-recovery system is the dual-alkali process. These scrubbers operate in much the same manner as the direct lime and limestone scrubbers. However, dual-alkali systems use a solution of sodium salts as the primary reagent to which lime is added for additional absorption. The soluble sodium salts are then recycled to the scrubber system and the insoluble portion of the slurry is left to settle so that it can be collected and disposed. Like direct lime and limestone systems, dual-alkali scrubbers remove up to 95 percent of the sulfur dioxide.<sup>16</sup>

Exhibit 3-10 presents a diagram of the operations of a wet FGD system. The flows shown for the flue gas, absorbent, slurry, and sludge are essentially the same for direct lime, direct limestone, alkaline fly ash, and dual-alkali systems.

At present, the two most popular methods of dry scrubbing under investigation are spray-drying and dry sorbent injection, although only the spray-drying process is now in commercial use at electric utility power plants.

# EXHIBIT 3-10

## FLOW DIAGRAM OF WET FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEM



Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, Prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, September 1983, p. 4-3.

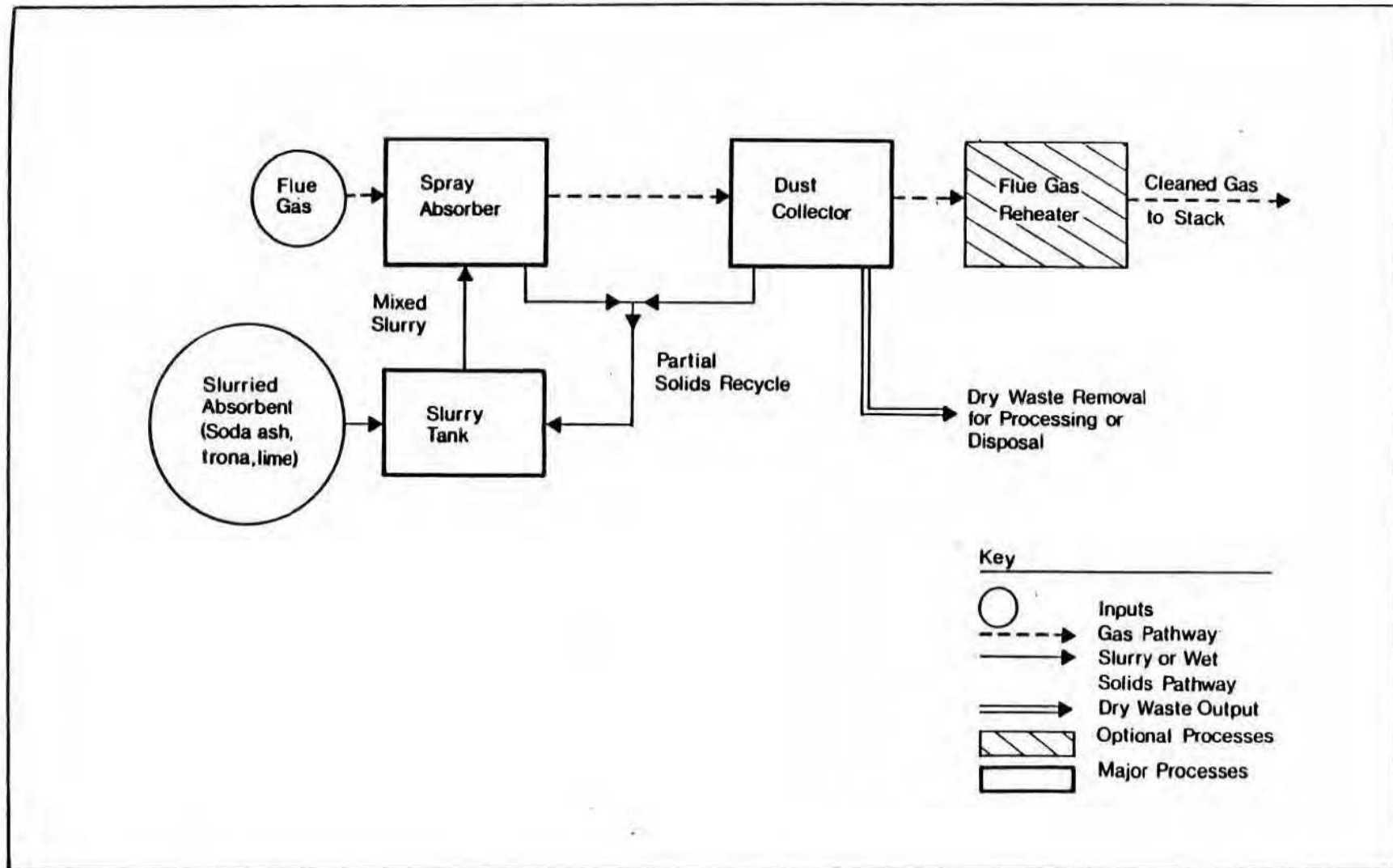
A flow diagram of a spray-drying system is presented in Exhibit 3-11. With this system, a fine spray of an alkaline solution is injected into the flue gas as it passes through a contact chamber, where the reaction with the sulfur oxides occurs. The heat of the flue gas evaporates the water from the absorbent solution, leaving a dry powder. This powder is then collected downstream of the contact chamber by a particulate collector, usually a baghouse. Spray-drying typically removes about 70 percent of the sulfur dioxide from the flue gas.<sup>17</sup> Because of the relatively low percentage reduction in sulfur dioxide achieved by spray-drying scrubbers compared with other scrubber technologies, this dry-scrubbing method is most commonly used for furnaces that burn lower sulfur coals.

Dry sorbent injection, illustrated schematically in Exhibit 3-12, is not yet used commercially by electric utilities, although one utility is designing a generating unit that will use this type of scrubber and which is due to begin operation by 1990.<sup>18</sup> This system involves the injection of a powdered sorbent, either nacholite or trona, into the flue gas upstream of a baghouse. Sulfur dioxide reacts with the reagent in the flue gas and on the surface of the filter in the baghouse. The dry wastes, which form a filter cake, are then removed during normal filter cleaning.

Dry injection offers several advantages over traditional wet scrubbing and spray-drying techniques: the required equipment is smaller and less expensive, no water is needed, flue gas reheating is not necessary, and sulfur dioxide and fly ash are removed simultaneously. Potential drawbacks of this process are the limited geographic availability of the sorbents and problems associated with waste disposal. For example, the waste tends to be very water soluble,

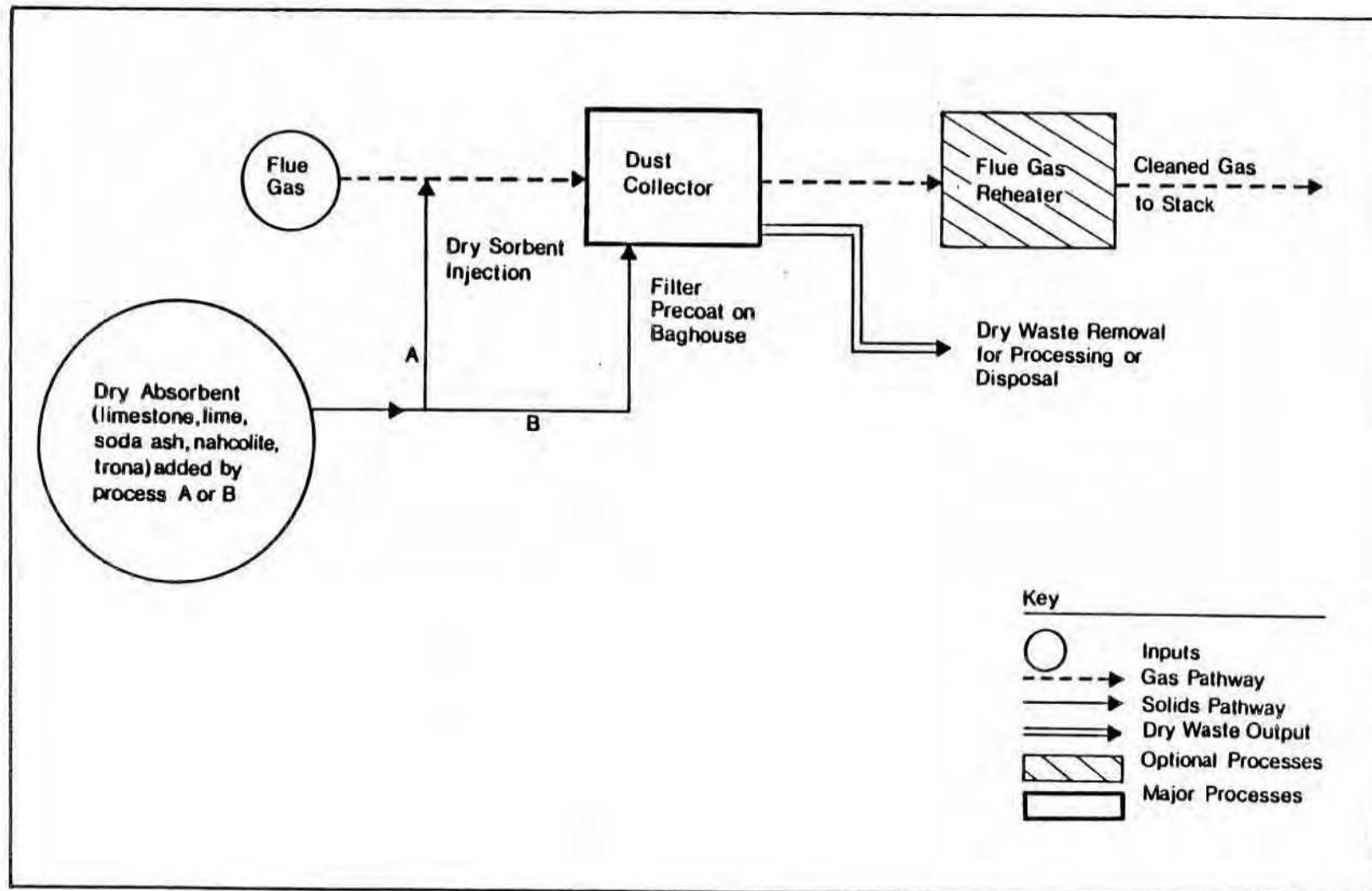
# EXHIBIT 3-11

## FLOW DIAGRAM OF SPRAY-DRYING FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEM



# EXHIBIT 3-12

## FLOW DIAGRAM OF DRY INJECTION FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEM



Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, Prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, September 1983, p. 4-6.



and could potentially affect ground-water quality. Also, dry injection is most effective when used for low-sulfur coals, achieving only 70 to 80 percent sulfur dioxide removal in most cases, compared with up to 95 percent removal by wet scrubbing systems.<sup>19</sup>

Recovery systems are designed to produce a salable by-product such as sulfur, sulfuric acid, or liquid sulfur dioxide; however, small amounts of waste are still produced. A prescrubber is usually required upstream of the main scrubber to filter out such contaminants as fly ash and chlorides. Secondary waste streams formed by the oxidation of the absorbent are sometimes present and, along with the prescrubber by-products, are the materials that need to be disposed. Two recovery FGD systems presently used commercially, the Wellman-Lord and Magnesium Oxide processes, are both based on wet scrubbing. Diagrams of these systems are shown in Exhibit 3-13. Other recovery systems, both wet and dry, have been developed, but are still in the testing phase.

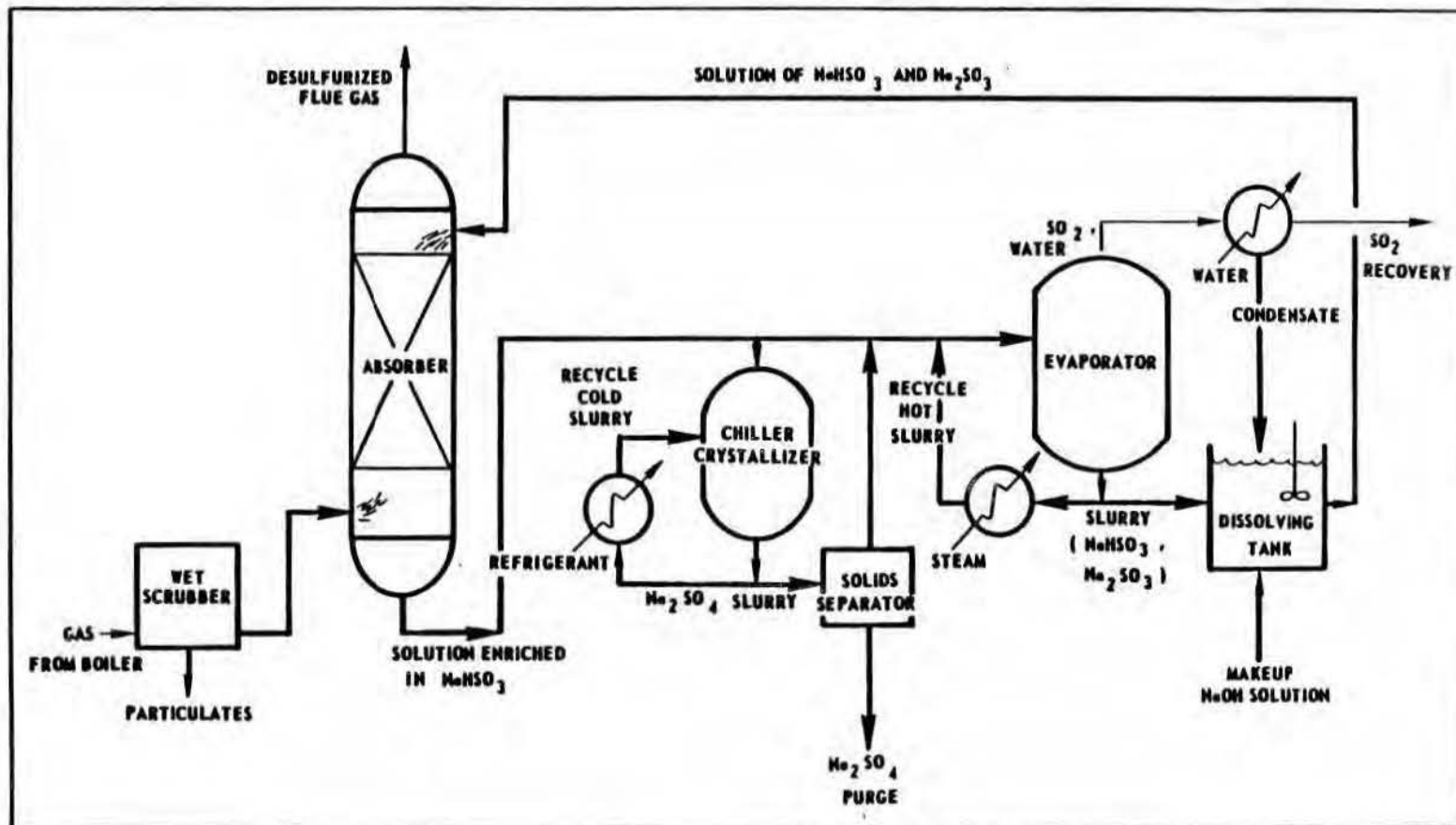
#### **3.2.2.2 Quantities of FGD Sludge Generated**

There has been a large increase in the quantity of FGD sludge generated over the past decade, as shown in Exhibit 3-14. This increase is due to the more widespread use of scrubbers brought about by tightened state limits on sulfur dioxide emissions, the Federal New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) of the Clean Air Act of 1971, and the revisions to the NSPS in 1979. This trend will continue as new power plants are equipped with scrubbers as required under the NSPS. By the year 2000, scrubber capacity is likely to be several times greater than at present.

# EXHIBIT 3-13

## FLOW DIAGRAMS OF RECOVERY FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEMS

### WELLMAN-LORD PROCESS

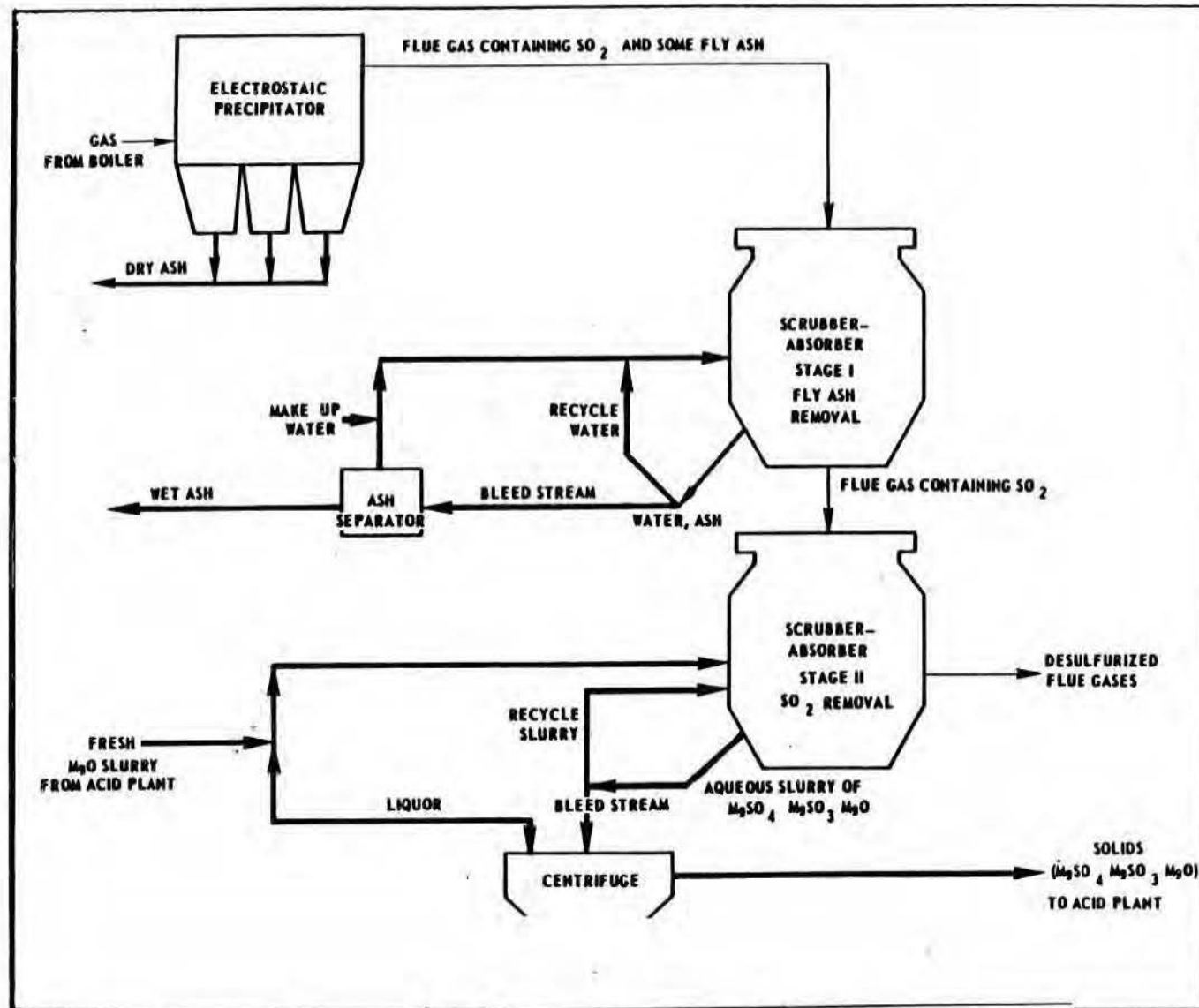


Source: Federal Power Commission, The Status of Flue Gas Desulfurization Applications in the United States: A Technological Assessment, July 1977, pp. VII-27, VII-30.

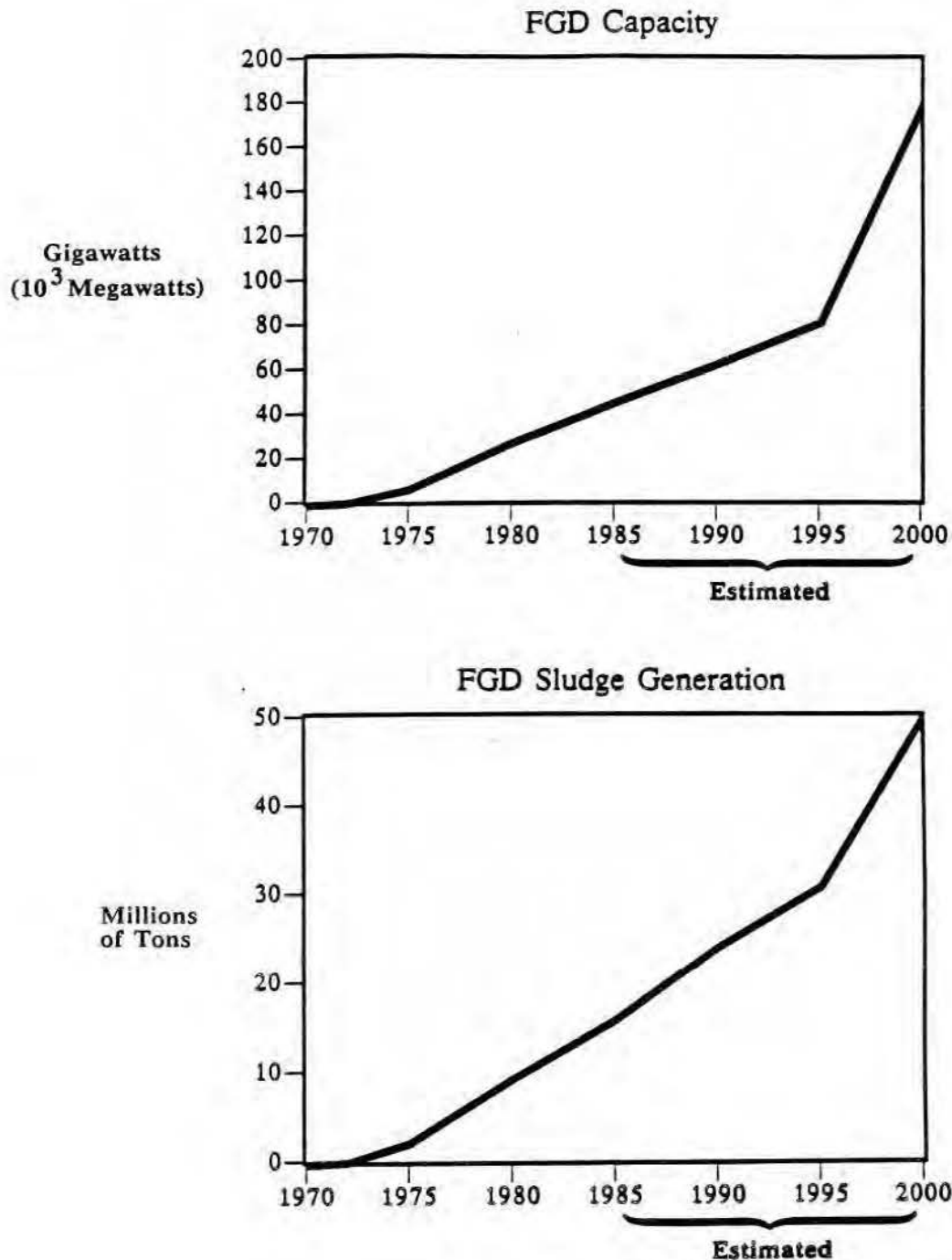
EXHIBIT 3-13 (Continued)

FLOW DIAGRAMS OF RECOVERY FLUE GAS DESULFURIZATION SYSTEMS

MAGNESIUM OXIDE PROCESS



## EXHIBIT 3-14

FGD CAPACITY AND FGD SLUDGE GENERATION  
1970-2000

Source: 1970-1984: Energy Information Administration, Cost and Quality of Fuels for Electric Utility Plants, and Arthur D. Little, Inc., Full Scale Field Evaluation of Waste Disposal from Coal-Fired Electric Generating Plants, Vol. 1, June 1985.

1985-2000: ICF Incorporated. See Appendix B for in-depth discussion of the methodologies used to develop these estimates.

The dramatic increase in scrubber capacity has a direct effect on the amount of scrubber sludge produced. In 1984, about 16 million tons of scrubber sludge were generated. By 2000, the annual amount of sludge produced is estimated to be about 50 million tons, over three times the sludge generated at present.<sup>20</sup>

All FGD sludge is comprised of spent reagent, which is made up of the chemicals that result from the reaction of the absorbent with the sulfur oxides in the flue gas, plus any unreacted portion of the absorbent. The sludge may also contain water and fly ash. Several factors determine how much spent reagent, water, and ash are present in the FGD sludge. These factors include the type of scrubber system used, the characteristics of the coal, and the sulfur dioxide emission limit that the power plant is required to meet by state or Federal law.

The type of FGD system is an important determinant of the amount of spent reagent, amount of water, and amount of ash present in the sludge. Reagents used in different systems vary as to their absorbent utilization, or "stoichiometry," which is the percentage of the reagent that reacts with the sulfur oxides. A lower percentage implies more reagent is needed to remove a given percentage of sulfur dioxide. Direct limestone systems have an average absorbent utilization of 80 percent, while the direct lime and dual-alkali processes both achieve higher utilization of 90 and 95 percent, respectively. This results in the generation of about six percent more sludge by direct limestone scrubbers compared to direct lime and dual-alkali processes.<sup>21</sup>

Wet systems, both non-recovery and recovery, employ aqueous solutions to remove the sulfur oxides from the flue gas. Dry FGD systems use no water for sulfur oxide removal, although dry FGD wastes may be mixed with water prior to disposal, which increases the volume of sludge. Because of their dependency on water, wet FGD systems generally produce larger volumes of wastes than do dry systems.

Wet FGD systems can also be used as fly ash removal devices. The amount of ash in the sludge depends on how much fly ash is generated by the boiler and whether any other particulate control device is upstream of the scrubber. In particular, alkaline fly ash scrubbers rely on the entrapment of ash to act as their primary absorbent, and therefore their sludge contains large amounts of ash. The collection of fly ash and wastes in a spray-drying system occurs simultaneously by a baghouse; therefore, the wastes from these systems also contain large proportions of ash. Recovery FGD systems often require prescrubbers to remove fly ash. Although recovery systems produce only about half the wastes of non-recovery systems, these wastes are predominantly made up of ash.

Specific characteristics of the coal can have a large effect on the quantity of sludge generated. For example, the higher the sulfur content, the more reagent that must be used to achieve a certain level of sulfur dioxide removal and, consequently, the more spent reagent in the sludge. The ash content of the coal affects the amount of ash caught up in the sludge. Just as using low-sulfur coal will reduce the amount of spent reagent, reducing the ash content prior to combustion will greatly reduce the amount of fly ash that is absorbed by wet scrubbers and thus the amount of sludge that must be disposed.



The amount by which a power plant must reduce sulfur dioxide emissions also affects the volume of sludge produced. To achieve a higher reduction, the amount of reagent used in the scrubber needs to be increased, which will, in turn, produce greater quantities of sludge.

### 3.2.2.3 Physical Characteristics of FGD Sludge

In general, the same physical properties important in determining the disposal behavior of ash are also important determinants of the disposal characteristics of FGD sludge. These physical characteristics -- particle size, compaction behavior, permeability, and shear strength -- vary considerably depending on the type of scrubber system and what (if any) preparation is done prior to disposal. Exhibit 3-15 presents representative ranges of values for these characteristics of FGD sludge.

Depending on the type of FGD system used, the particle size distribution of FGD sludge can vary substantially. For example, sludge from wet scrubbers tends to have a narrow range of particle sizes. The particles produced by dual-alkali systems are finer than those produced by direct lime or limestone scrubbers, while dry scrubbers generally produce sludge containing larger particles.

The density of FGD sludge depends directly on the method of handling. Wet sludge mixed with ash will have a higher density than untreated sludge, while chemical fixation increases the density even more.<sup>22</sup> The density of the particles in dry sludge varies widely.

## EXHIBIT 3-15

REPRESENTATIVE RANGES OF VALUES FOR THE  
PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF FGD SLUDGE

|                                       | <u>Wet</u>            | <u>Dry</u>            |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Particle Size (mm)                    | .001-.05              | .002-.074             |
| Density (g/cm <sup>3</sup> )          | 0.9-1.7               | Variable              |
| Optimum Moisture Content (%)          | 16-43                 | 0                     |
| Permeability (cm/sec)                 | $10^{-6}$ - $10^{-4}$ | $10^{-7}$ - $10^{-6}$ |
| Unconfined Compressive Strength (psi) | 0-1600                | 41-2250               |

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Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, pp. 4-8 - 4-15.

The solids content of scrubber sludge is a function of many things, including whether the sludge is treated prior to disposal, the size of the particles in the sludge, the sulfur content of the coal, the amount of ash present in the sludge, and the desulfurization process used. The percentage of solids in untreated sludges usually ranges from 20 to 40 percent, although it can be as high as 60 percent.<sup>23</sup> Depending on the method of treatment used before disposal (if any), the percentage of solids could be much higher. In fact, some chemical fixation processes are designed to transform the sludge into a cement-like product.

The permeabilities of untreated FGD sludges from wet scrubber systems generally are very similar. Mixing the sludge with fly ash does not necessarily change the degree of permeability, although if fly ash acts as a fixative when added to the sludge, the mixed waste product will have a reduced permeability. Chemical fixation also can decrease permeability. Sludge from dry scrubber systems has low permeability relative to sludge from wet systems.

The shear strength of FGD sludge is referred to as "unconfined compressive strength," which reflects the load-bearing capacity of the sludge. The unconfined compressive strength of sludge is sensitive to the moisture content and age of the sludge. Untreated wet sludge has no compressive strength and is similar to toothpaste in this respect. Mixing with ash or lime increases compressive strength, as does chemical fixation. Also, as the treated sludge ages, its compressive strength becomes greater.

#### 3.2.2.4 Chemical Characteristics of FGD Sludge

The major constituents found in wet FGD sludge are determined by the absorbent reagent used, the quantity of fly ash present, the sulfur content of the coal, and whether or not forced oxidation is used.

Most wet FGD systems operate by causing the sulfur dioxide in the flue gas to react with an absorbent reagent, such as lime or limestone, to form a calcium compound, such as calcium sulfite ( $\text{CaSO}_3$ ), calcium sulfate or gypsum ( $\text{CaSO}_4$ ), or calcium sulfite-sulfate ( $\text{CaSO}_3 \cdot \text{CaSO}_4$ ), which can then be removed from the system in the sludge. The ratio of calcium sulfate to calcium sulfite is generally greater in sludge generated by direct limestone scrubber systems than in that produced by direct lime systems.

Dual-alkali scrubber systems differ slightly in that they use absorbent solutions containing sodium hydroxide ( $\text{NaOH}$ ) or sodium sulfite ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_3$ ) as well as lime; sludges from these processes tend to have high levels of calcium sulfite and sodium salts. Because these compounds are highly soluble and apt to leach, they may pose problems as major components in a landfilled sludge.<sup>24</sup>

Spray-drying scrubber systems produce particulates containing either sodium sulfate ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_4$ ) and sodium sulfite ( $\text{Na}_2\text{SO}_3$ ) or calcium sulfate ( $\text{CaSO}_4$ ) and calcium sulfite ( $\text{CaSO}_3$ ), depending on whether the reagents are sodium- or calcium-based.

Exhibits 3-16 and 3-17 show the major chemical constituents found in sludge solids and sludge liquors. Oxides of calcium, silicon, magnesium, aluminum, iron, sodium, and potassium can be found in most FGD sludge. The presence of

## EXHIBIT 3-16

**CONCENTRATION OF MAJOR CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS  
OF WET FGD SLUDGE SOLIDS BY SCRUBBER SYSTEM  
AND SOURCE OF COAL \***  
(percent of total)

|  | <u>Direct Lime</u> |             | <u>Direct Limestone</u> |             | <u>Dual-Alkali</u> |             | <u>Alkaline</u>               |
|--|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|
|  | <u>East</u>        | <u>West</u> | <u>East</u>             | <u>West</u> | <u>East</u>        | <u>West</u> | <u>Fly Ash</u><br><u>West</u> |
| Calcium Sulfate<br>(CaSO <sub>4</sub> )                                | 15-19              | 17-95       | 5-23                    | 85          | 15-68              | 82          | 20                            |
| CaSO <sub>3</sub> ·1/2 H <sub>2</sub> O                                | 13-69              | 2-11        | 17-50                   | 8           | 13-68              | 1           | 15                            |
| Calcium Sulfite<br>(CaSO <sub>3</sub> )                                | 1-22               | 0-3         | 15-74                   | 6           | 8-10               | 11          | --                            |
| Sodium Sulfate<br>(Na <sub>2</sub> SO <sub>4</sub> ·7H <sub>2</sub> O) | --                 | --          | --                      | --          | 4-7                | 4           | --                            |
| Fly Ash  | 16-60              | 3-59        | 1-45                    | 3           | 0-7                | 8           | 65                            |

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\* Source of coal is categorized by Eastern producing regions (Northern Appalachia, Central Appalachia, Southern Appalachia, Midwest, Central West, and Gulf; i.e., Bureau of Mine (BOM) Districts #1-15, 24) and Western producing regions (Eastern Northern Great Plains, Western Northern Great Plains, Rockies, Southwest, and Northwest; i.e., BOM Districts #16-23).

Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3236, September 1983, p. 4-18.

## EXHIBIT 3-17

**CONCENTRATION OF MAJOR CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS  
OF WET FGD SLUDGE LIQUORS BY SCRUBBER SYSTEM  
AND SOURCE OF COAL a/**

| <u>Constituent</u> <u>b/</u> | <u>Direct Lime</u> | <u>Direct Limestone</u> |                 | <u>Dual-Alkali</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
|                              | <u>East</u>        | <u>East</u>             | <u>West</u>     | <u>East</u>        |
| pH (units)                   | 8-9.4              | 5.5-8.4                 | 6.6-6.8         | 12.1               |
| Total Dissolved Solids       | 2,800 -<br>10,260  | 5400                    | 3300-<br>14,000 | 155,700            |
| Chloride                     | 1050-4900          | 1000                    | 620-4200        | 4900-5600          |
| Potassium                    | 11-28              | 24                      | 8-28            | 320-380            |
| Sodium                       | 36-137             | 12                      | 370-2250        | 53,600-55,300      |
| Calcium                      | 660-2520           | 1600                    | 390-770         | 7-12               |
| Magnesium                    | 24-420             | 53                      | 3-9             | 0.1                |
| Sulfate                      | 800-4500           | 2500                    | 1360-4000       | 80,000-84,000      |
| Sulfite                      | 0.9-2.7            | 160                     | 1-3900          | --                 |

a/ Source of coal is categorized by Eastern producing regions (Northern Appalachia, Central Appalachia, Southern Appalachia, Midwest, Central West, and Gulf; i.e., BOM Districts #1-15, 24) and Western producing regions (Eastern Northern Great Plains, Western Northern Great Plains, Rockies, Southwest, and Northwest; i.e., BOM Districts #16-23).

b/ All constituent concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3226, September 1983, p. 4-20.



these compounds results from the presence of fly ash in the sludge, and they are unreactive in FGD systems. In wet scrubbers that also serve as fly ash collection devices, more than 50 percent of the sludge solids may be ash. However, when an ESP or baghouse precedes the scrubber, ash may make up less than 10 percent of the sludge solids.<sup>25</sup>

The calcium sulfate/calcium sulfite ratio of the sludge solids is important because sludge containing a greater proportion of sulfates has better disposal properties due to its lower solubility. This ratio is usually higher in systems scrubbing lower sulfur coals and in direct limestone systems. Many scrubber systems add a forced oxidation step to lower the calcium sulfite content of the sludge, thereby lowering its solubility.

The concentration of trace elements in FGD sludge reflects the levels of trace elements in the ash, the efficiency of the scrubber in capturing trace elements in the flue gas, and the trace elements present in the reagent and in the process makeup waters. Fly ash is the primary source of most of the trace elements found in scrubber sludge. Some elements, such as mercury and selenium, may be scrubbed directly from the flue gases and then captured in the scrubber sludge. Exhibit 3-18 illustrates the concentrations at which major trace elements are found in sludge from wet scrubber systems.

### **3.3 LOW-VOLUME WASTES**

Low-volume utility wastes are those waste streams generated in the routine cleaning of plant equipment and in purifying of water used in the combustion process. The types and volumes of low-volume wastes vary among different power



## EXHIBIT 3-18

**CONCENTRATION OF TRACE ELEMENTS FOUND IN WET-FGD SLUDGES  
(Solids and Liquors)**

|          | <u>Sludge Solids</u> <u>a/</u> |             |               | <u>Sludge Liquors</u> <u>b/</u> |             |               |
|----------|--------------------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|
|          | <u>Range</u>                   |             | <u>Median</u> | <u>Range</u>                    |             | <u>Median</u> |
|          | <u>Low</u>                     | <u>High</u> |               | <u>Low</u>                      | <u>High</u> |               |
| Arsenic  | 0.8                            | 52.0        | 12            | 0.0004                          | 0.1         | 0.03          |
| Boron    | 42.0                           | 530.0       | 14.0          | 2.1                             | 76.0        | 14.9          |
| Cadmium  | 0.1                            | 25.0        | 10.6          | 0.002                           | 0.1         | 0.02          |
| Chromium | 1.6                            | 180.0       | 15.0          | 0.0002                          | 0.3         | 0.02          |
| Copper   | 6.0                            | 340.0       | 17.5          | 0.0045                          | 0.5         | 0.03          |
| Fluoride | 266.0                          | 1017.0      | 625.0         | 0.2                             | 63.0        | 2.3           |
| Mercury  | 0.01                           | 6.0         | 0.4           | 0.00006                         | 0.1         | 0.005         |
| Lead     | 0.2                            | 290.0       | 2.4           | 0.005                           | 0.5         | 0.03          |
| Selenium | 2.0                            | 60.0        | 5.0           | 0.003                           | 1.9         | 0.18          |

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a/ Sludge solid concentrations in milligrams per kilogram.

b/ Sludge liquor concentrations in milligrams per liter.

Source: Tetra Tech Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, EPRI EA-3226, September 1983, p. 4-24.

plants, depending on plant-specific factors such as the size of the plant, the type of equipment, and the age of the equipment. Some low-volume wastes commonly produced are:

- boiler blowdown,
- coal pile runoff,
- cooling tower blowdown,
- demineralizer regenerants and rinses,
- metal and boiler cleaning wastes,
- pyrites, and
- sump effluents.

Estimates of the total amount of low-volume wastes generated each year by coal-fired power plants are not available. The frequency of generation and the quantities generated vary widely from power plant to power plant, depending on the maintenance requirements of the plant and operating conditions. Variations also occur within the same power plant, according to its maintenance schedule and operations. Exhibit 3-19 gives representative annual production figures for low-volume wastes generated by a typical power plant.

This section presents for each type of low-volume waste a brief description of how the waste is generated, typical quantities produced, and the physical and chemical composition of the waste.

### **3.3.1 Boiler Blowdown**

Boiler systems can be either a once-through (supercritical) type or a

## EXHIBIT 3-19

**ANNUAL LOW-VOLUME WASTE GENERATION  
AT A REPRESENTATIVE COAL-FIRED POWER PLANT \***

| <u>Type of Waste</u>       | <u>Average Annual Production</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Boiler Blowdown            | 11 million gallons/year          |
| Coal Pile Runoff           | 20 inches/year                   |
| Cooling Tower Blowdown     | 2.6 billion gallons/year         |
| Demineralizer Regenerant   | 5 million gallons/year           |
| Gas-side Boiler Cleaning   | 700,000 gallons/year             |
| Water-Side Boiler Cleaning | 180,000 gallons/year             |
| Pyrites                    | 65,000 tons/year                 |

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\* Assuming a 500 megawatt power plant, operating at 70 percent capacity.

Sources: Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Waste and Water Management for Conventional Coal Combustion Assessment Report - 1979: Volume II: Water Management, EPA-600/7-80-012b, March 1980.

drum-type. In drum-type boiler systems, after steam passes through the turbines, it is converted back to water in the condenser and is recirculated through the boiler to produce steam again. In this process, impurities that become concentrated in the feedwater periodically must be purged from the system. This waste stream is known as boiler blowdown. A once-through system, however, maintains pressurized steam throughout the cycle, and thus does not require the recirculation of water. These boiler types, therefore, do not generate boiler blowdown.

Boiler blowdown is produced either in a continuous stream or intermittently during the day. The flow is adjusted in order to maintain the desired water quality in the boiler and is dependent on the quality of the feedwater and the size and condition of the boiler. The average blowdown rate for a 500 megawatt unit can range from 20 to 60 gallons per minute, or about 2 to 7 gallons per megawatt-hour.<sup>26</sup>

Boiler blowdown is generally fairly alkaline with a low level of total dissolved solids. The waste stream usually contains certain chemical additives used to control scale and corrosion. Trace elements commonly found in boiler blowdown are copper, iron, and nickel. The components and characteristics of boiler blowdown are presented in Exhibit 3-20.

### **3.3.2 Coal Pile Runoff**

Power plants typically maintain two types of coal storage piles in their coal yards: an active pile to supply their immediate needs and an inactive or long-term pile, which generally stores a 60- to 90-day supply of coal. Coal

## EXHIBIT 3-20

## CHARACTERISTICS OF BOILER BLOWDOWN

| Parameter              | a/<br>Range |         |
|------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                        | Low         | High    |
| pH (units)             | 8.3         | 12.0    |
| Total Solids           | 125.0       | 1,407.0 |
| Total Suspended Solids | 2.7         | 31.0    |
| Total Dissolved Solids | 11.0        | 1,405.0 |
| BOD5                   | 10.8        | 11.7    |
| COD                    | 2.0         | 157.0   |
| Hydroxide Alkalinity   | 10.0        | 100.0   |
| Oil and Grease         | 1.0         | 14.8    |
| Phosphate (total)      | 1.5         | 50.0    |
| Ammonia                | 0.0         | 2.0     |
| Cyanide (total)        | 0.005       | 0.014   |
| Chromium (total)       | 0.02        | b/      |
| Chromium (Hexavalent)  | 0.005       | 0.009   |
| Copper                 | 0.02        | 0.2     |
| Iron                   | 0.03        | 1.4     |
| Nickel                 | 0.03        | b/      |
| Zinc                   | 0.01        | 0.05    |

a/ All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

b/ Data on these elements were limited.

Source: EnviroSphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

piles are usually 25-40 feet high and can cover an area of up to 75 acres, depending on the size and demands of the power plant.<sup>27</sup> Inactive coal piles are generally sealed with a tar spray to protect the coal against the weather; active piles are usually open and exposed. Coal pile runoff is formed when water comes into contact with the piles, whether from rainfall or snowfall, during spraying for dust control, or from underground streams that surface under the piles.

The quantity of coal pile runoff depends primarily on rainfall and, to a lesser extent, the permeability of the soil. It has been estimated that, on average, 73 percent of the total rainfall on coal piles becomes coal pile runoff.<sup>28</sup>

The composition of coal pile runoff is influenced by the composition of the coal, the drainage patterns of the coal pile, and the amount of water that has seeped through. Bituminous coals generate runoff that is usually acidic, with the level of acidity depending on the availability of neutralizing materials in the coal, while subbituminous coals tend to produce neutral to alkaline runoff. Elements commonly found in high concentrations in coal pile runoff are copper, zinc, magnesium, aluminum, chloride, iron, sodium, and sulfate. Exhibit 3-21 displays ranges of concentrations for these and other characteristics.

### **3.3.3 Cooling Tower Blowdown**

Power plants need cooling systems to dissipate the heat energy that remains after the production of electricity.<sup>29</sup> The two major types of cooling systems are once-through and recirculating. Cooling tower blowdown generally refers to



## EXHIBIT 3-21

## CHARACTERISTICS OF COAL PILE RUNOFF

| Parameter                       | Range <sup>a/</sup> |                   |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|                                 | Low                 | High              |
| pH (units)                      | 2.1                 | 9.3 <sup>b/</sup> |
| Acidity (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> ) | 300.0               | 7,100.0           |
| Total Dissolved Solids          | 270.0               | 28,970.0          |
| Total Suspended Solids          | 8.0                 | 2,500.0           |
| Aluminum                        | 20.0                | 1,200.0           |
| Ammonia                         | 0.0                 | 1.8               |
| Arsenic                         | 0.005               | 0.6               |
| Beryllium                       | 0.01                | 0.07              |
| Cadmium                         | 0.001               | 0.003             |
| Chloride                        | 3.6                 | 481.0             |
| Chromium                        | 0.005               | 16.0              |
| Cobalt                          | 0.025               | --                |
| Copper                          | 0.01                | 6.1               |
| Iron                            | 0.1                 | 5,250.0           |
| Magnesium                       | 0.0                 | 174.0             |
| Manganese                       | 0.9                 | 180.0             |
| Mercury                         | 0.0002              | 0.007             |
| Nickel                          | 0.1                 | 4.5               |
| Nitrate                         | 0.3                 | 1.9               |
| Phosphorus                      | 0.2                 | 1.2               |
| Selenium                        | 0.001               | 0.03              |
| Sodium                          | 160.0               | 1,260.0           |
| Sulfate                         | 130.0               | 20,000.0          |
| Zinc                            | 0.006               | 26.0              |

<sup>a/</sup> All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

<sup>b/</sup> Electric Power Research Institute, Manual For Management of Low-Volume Wastes From Fossil-Fuel-Fired Power Plants, prepared by Radian Corporation, Austin, Texas, July 1987.

Source: All information, unless noted otherwise, is from Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

the water withdrawn from a recirculating cooling system to control the concentration of impurities in the cooling water; although once-through systems also discharge water from the cooling system, this discharge is not typically referred to as cooling tower blowdown. At present, about two-thirds of electric utility power plants use a once-through cooling system. This percentage may decrease, however, due to concern over water availability and potential environmental concern over thermal discharges; consequently, future plants may be built with recirculating systems that use cooling towers or cooling ponds.<sup>30</sup>

Once-through cooling systems are primarily used by power plants located next to large bodies of water. After passing through the condenser, the cooling water is discharged, usually into a river, lake, or pond. The quantity discharged ranges from 26,000 to 93,000 gallons per megawatt-hour. For a 500 megawatt plant, this roughly equals 70-300 billion gallons per year.<sup>31</sup> In most instances, the chemical composition of the water remains the same after passing through the condenser, but some changes may occur as the result of the formation of corrosion products or the addition of biocides.

Recirculating cooling systems can use either cooling ponds or cooling towers. In a cooling pond system, water is drawn from a large body of water, such as a pond or canal. After it passes through the condenser to absorb waste heat, the water is recycled back into the pond or canal. Cooling tower systems operate by spraying the water through a cooling tower. About 80 percent of the waste heat contained in the water is then released through evaporation. The remainder of the water is recycled back through the cooling tower system. Cooling tower blowdown is a waste stream bled off to control the concentrations

of impurities and contaminants in the cooling system that could lead to scale formation in the condenser.<sup>32</sup>

The cooling tower blowdown rate is adjusted to maintain water quality in the recirculating cooling system in order to prevent scale formation in the condenser. The quantity of blowdown generated is a function of the quality of the makeup water (the water added to the system to replace that which is lost by evaporation and blowdown), the condition of the cooling system, and the amount of water evaporated by the cooling tower. For a representative 500 megawatt unit, the blowdown rate varies between 2 and 30 cubic feet (15 to 225 gallons) per second.<sup>33</sup>

The composition and quantity of cooling tower blowdown varies greatly from plant to plant. It generally reflects the characteristics of the makeup waters (e.g., fresh water versus brackish or saline water) and the chemicals added to prevent the growth of fungi, algae, and bacteria in the cooling towers and to prevent corrosion in the condensers. Some of these chemical additives are chlorine, chromate, zinc, phosphate, and silicate. Ranges of concentration for some of the characteristics and components of cooling tower blowdown are shown in Exhibit 3-22.

#### **3.3.4 Demineralizer Regenerant and Rinses**

A power plant must treat water prior to its use as makeup water. The use of demineralizers is the most common method of purification. During the demineralization process, which may entail several rinses, high-purity process water is provided for the boiler through an ion exchange process. The wastes

## EXHIBIT 3-22

## CHARACTERISTICS OF COOLING TOWER BLOWDOWN

| Parameter                              | a/<br>Range |          |
|--|-------------|----------|
|  | Low         | High     |
| Alkalinity (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> )     | 8.0         | 556.0    |
| BOD                                    | --          | 94.0     |
| COD                                    | --          | 436.0    |
| Total Solids                           | 750.0       | 32,678.0 |
| Total Dissolved Solids                 | 4.1         | 32,676.0 |
| Total Suspended Solids                 | 0.2         | 220.0    |
| Ammonia (as N)                         | 0.01        | 11.6     |
| Nitrate (as N)                         | 0.1         | 711.0    |
| Phosphorus (as P)                      | 0.1         | 17.7     |
| Total Hardness (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> ) | 84.0        | 2,580.0  |
| Sulfate                                | 7.2         | 20,658.0 |
| Chloride                               | 5.0         | 16,300.0 |
| Fluoride b/                            | 0.3         | 33.0     |
| Aluminum b/                            | 1,100.0     | 1,700.0  |
| Boron b/                               | 0.5         | 1.0      |
| Chromium (ug/l)                        | 0.02        | 120.0    |
| Copper (ug/l)                          | 0.01        | 1,740.0  |
| Iron (ug/l)                            | 0.1         | 1,160.0  |
| Lead (ug/l) b/                         | 4.0         | --       |
| Magnesium (ug/l)                       | 0.1         | 1,580.0  |
| Manganese (ug/l) b/                    | 24.0        | 220.0    |
| Mercury (ug/l) b/                      | 1.5         | --       |
| Nickel (ug/l)                          | 0.03        | 150.0    |
| Zinc (ug/l)                            | 0.02        | 3,000.0  |
| Oil & Grease                           | 1.0         | 7.4      |
| Phenols (ug/l)                         | --          | 72.0     |
| Surfactants                            | 0.2         | --       |
| Sodium                                 | 3.4         | 11,578.0 |

a/ All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

b/ Data on these elements were limited.

Source: Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

produced in this process can be either acidic or alkaline. When sulfuric acid is employed as the regenerant, calcium sulfate is precipitated in the waste stream. Exhibit 3-23 presents ranges for the components of demineralizer regenerants and rinses.

Regeneration of boiler makeup water by demineralizers is done on a batch basis. The frequency with which the process occurs depends on the quality of the incoming water, although for a 500 megawatt unit, regeneration usually occurs every one to four days. A single regeneration requires approximately 30,000 gallons of water, which amounts to about 3-10 million gallons per year.<sup>34</sup>

#### **3.3.5 Metal and Boiler Cleaning Wastes**

This category of low-volume waste streams can be divided into two basic types: gas-side cleaning wastes and water-side cleaning wastes. Gas-side wastes are produced during maintenance of the gas-side of the boiler, which includes the air preheater, economizer, superheater, stack, and ancillary equipment. Residues from coal combustion (such as soot and fly ash), which build up on these surfaces, must be removed periodically -- usually with plain water containing no chemical additives.

Water-side wastes are produced during cleaning of the boiler tubes, the superheater, and the condenser, which are located on the water-side or steam-side of the boiler. The scale and corrosion products that build up on these boiler parts must be removed with cleaning solutions containing chemical additives.

## EXHIBIT 3-23

CHARACTERISTICS OF  
SPENT DEMINERALIZER REGENERANTS

| Parameter                              | a/<br>Range |           |
|--|-------------|-----------|
|  | Low         | High      |
| Alkalinity (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> )     | 0.0         | 3,831.0   |
| BOD                                    | 0.0         | 344.0     |
| COD                                    | 0.0         | 440.0     |
| Total Solids                           | 284.0       | 36,237.0  |
| Total Dissolved Solids                 | 283.0       | 25,235.0  |
| Total Suspended Solids                 | 0.0         | 300.0 c/  |
| Ammonia (as N)                         | 0.0         | 435.0     |
| Phosphorus (as P)                      | 0.0         | 87.2      |
| Turbidity (JTU)                        | 2.5         | 100.0     |
| Total Hardness (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> ) | 0.0         | 8,000.0   |
| Sulfate                                | 4.5         | 9,947.0   |
| Chloride                               | 0.0         | 20,500.0  |
| Boron                                  | 0.0         | 0.1       |
| Chromium                               | 0.0         | 2,168.0   |
| Copper (ug/l)                          | 0.0         | 3,091.0   |
| Iron (ug/l)                            | 0.0         | 2,250.0   |
| Lead (ug/l) b/                         | 160.0       | 37,500.0  |
| Magnesium (ug/l)                       | 0.0         | 753.0     |
| Manganese (ug/l)                       | 0.0         | 3,100.0   |
| Mercury (ug/l)                         | 0.05        | --        |
| Nickel (ug/l)                          | 0.0         | 560.0     |
| Zinc (ug/l)                            | 0.0         | 4,500.0   |
| Oil & Grease b/                        | 0.0         | 24.5      |
| Phenols (ug/l)                         | 0.0         | 303,000.0 |
| Surfactants b/                         | 1.7         | --        |
| Nitrate as N                           | 0.0         | 118.0     |
| Algicides b/                           | 0.003       | --        |
| Sodium                                 | 4.9         | 30,000.0  |

a/ All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

b/ Data on these components were limited.

c/ Electric Power Research Institute, Manual For Management of Low-Volume Wastes From Fossil-Fuel-Fired Power Plants, prepared by Radian Corporation, Austin, Texas, July 1987.

Source: All data, unless noted otherwise, are from Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.



The boiler and auxiliary equipment are cleaned intermittently, creating large quantities of wastes in a short time. Gas-side boiler cleaning is done approximately twice a year. The volume of the waste stream produced depends on the size of the boiler and the number of rinses. For a typical plant, gas-side cleanings can produce between 24,000 and 700,000 gallons of wastes. Water-side equipment is cleaned less frequently, approximately once every three years. As is true of gas-side cleaning, the volume of waste produced varies with the number of rinses. A representative 500 megawatt unit generates about 120,000-240,000 gallons of wastewater per treatment.<sup>35</sup>

Because no chemicals are used, the composition of the waste streams associated with gas-side cleaning directly reflects the composition of the soot and fly ash residues and, therefore, of the coal that is burned. Exhibit 3-24 shows two reported values for components and characteristics of gas-side cleaning waste streams.

The particular solution used for the cleaning of the water-side of the boiler varies depending on the equipment being cleaned and the type of scale that needs to be removed. When the scale contains high levels of metallic copper, an alkaline solution that contains ammonium salts, an oxidizing agent such as potassium or sodium bromate or chlorate, and nitrates or nitrites is used. Exhibit 3-25 presents some of the major characteristics associated with these types of solutions and representative ranges of concentrations in which they are found.

For the removal of scale caused by water hardness, iron oxides, and copper oxide, an acid cleaning solution is needed. Usually hydrochloric acid acts as



## EXHIBIT 3-24

## REPORTED CHARACTERISTICS OF GAS-SIDE CLEANING WASTES

| <u>Parameter</u>               | Quantities Produced per Cleaning<br>(in lbs. except as noted) <u>a/</u> |                 |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|
|                                | <u>Source A</u>   | <u>Source B</u> |
| Cleaning Frequency (cycles/yr) | 2.0   | 8.0             |
| Batch Volume (1000 gallons)    | 720.0   | 24.0            |
| Alkalinity                     | 0.0   | 6.0             |
| COD                            | 1,134.0   | 19.0            |
| Total Solids                   | 40,861.0  | 4,002.0         |
| Total Dissolved Solids         | 35,127.0  | 3,002.0         |
| Total Suspended Solids         | 3,823.0   | 119.1           |
| Turbidity (JTU)                | 476.0   | 98.0            |
| Hardness                       | 35,409.0  | 791.4           |
| Ammonia                        | 1.5   | 0.4             |
| Chloride                       | 0.0   | 18.0            |
| Chromium (total)               | 0.03  | 1.0             |
| Copper                         | --  | 0.3             |
| Iron                           | 900.0   | 30.0            |
| Lead                           | --  | --              |
| Magnesium                      | 11,949.0  | 190.3           |
| Nickel                         | 30.0  | --              |
| Nitrate                        | 14.7  | 0.7             |
| Phosphorus                     | 11.1  | 0.3             |
| Sodium                         | 0.0   | 9.0             |
| Sulfate                        | 11,949.0  | 299.4           |
| Vanadium                       | --  | --              |
| Zinc                           | 28.7  | 2.0             |

a/ Quantities produced are shown for two different reported values.

Source: EnviroSphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

## EXHIBIT 3-25

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SPENT WATER-SIDE  
ALKALINE CLEANING WASTES**

| Parameter                          | Range <sup>a/</sup> |                    |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
|                                    | Low                 | High               |
| Alkalinity (as CaCO <sub>3</sub> ) | 20,200.0            | 25,700.0           |
| NH <sub>3</sub> -N                 | 4,280.0             | 6,360.0            |
| Kjeldahl-N                         | 5,190.0             | 7,850.0            |
| Nitrate-N                          | 1.0                 | 193.0              |
| Oil & Grease                       | 7.9                 | 10.3               |
| BOD <sub>5</sub>                   | 5,820.0             | 8,060.0            |
| COD                                | 14,600.0            | 20,900.0           |
| Total Suspended Solids             | 5,580.0             | 6,720.0            |
| Total Dissolved Solids             | 10.0                | 400.0              |
| TDS                                | 22,100.0            | 32,300.0           |
| Total Iron                         | 180.0               | 10,800.0           |
| Silica                             | 1.0                 | 40.0               |
| Chromium                           | 0.2                 | 7.7 <sup>b/</sup>  |
| Copper                             | 8.0                 | 1,912.0            |
| Lead                               | 0.004 <sup>b/</sup> | 23.0 <sup>b/</sup> |
| Manganese                          | 0.1                 | 14.3               |
| Nickel                             | 2.5                 | 130.0              |
| Tin                                | 2.0                 | 20.7               |
| Zinc                               | 3.1                 | 390.0              |
| pH (units)                         | 8.4 <sup>b/</sup>   | 10.3 <sup>b/</sup> |

<sup>a/</sup> All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

<sup>b/</sup> Electric Power Research Institute, Manual For Management of Low-Volume Wastes From Fossil-Fuel-Fired Power Plants, prepared by Radian Corporation, Austin, Texas, July 1987.

Source: All data, unless noted otherwise, are from Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

the solvent in these solutions, although sulfuric, phosphoric, and nitric acids can also be used. Organic acids have been used increasingly as substitutes for hydrochloric acid because of their lower toxicity. For the removal of silica deposits, hydrofluoric acid or fluoride salts are added to the cleaning solution. Exhibit 3-26 presents the various characteristics of acid boiler cleaning solutions.

Alkaline chelating rinses and alkaline passivating rinses are often used to remove iron and copper compounds and silica and to neutralize any residual acidity left over from acid cleaning. These solutions may contain phosphates, chromates, nitrates, nitrites, ammonia, EDTA, citrates, gluconates, caustic soda, or soda ash. Exhibit 3-27 gives representative ranges for these components and others present in these rinses.

### **3.3.6 Pyrites**

Pyrites are the solid mineral compounds, such as iron sulfides or other rock-like substances, present in raw coal. Most pyrites are generally separated out before coal is burned, usually at a preparation plant prior to shipment to the power plant. Smaller quantities of pyrites are often removed at the power plant just before the coal is pulverized. The size of the deposits depends on the method by which they are separated from the coal.

The volume of pyrites collected at a power plant depends on the amount and quality of the coal that is burned, which is determined by the source of the coal and the preparation process, as well as by the coal pulverization process.

## EXHIBIT 3-26

CHARACTERISTICS OF SPENT WATER-SIDE  
HYDROCHLORIC ACID CLEANING WASTES

| Parameter              | a/<br>Range |         |
|------------------------|-------------|---------|
|                        | Low         | High    |
| pH (units)             | 0.5         | 3.3     |
| Total Suspended Solids | 8.0         | 2375.0  |
| Silica                 | 19.0        | 280.0   |
| NH3-N                  | 80.0        | 325.0   |
| Nitrogen               | 1.0         | 870.0   |
| Phosphorus             | 1.0         | 300.0   |
| Sulfate                | 1.0         | 10.0    |
| Aluminum               | 6.5         | 8.2     |
| Arsenic                | 0.01        | 0.1     |
| Barium                 | 0.1         | 0.4     |
| Beryllium              | 0.0         | 0.1     |
| Cadmium                | 0.001       | 0.13 b/ |
| Calcium                | 16.0        | 980.0   |
| Chromium               | 0.005       | 16.8    |
| Copper                 | 2.2         | 960.0   |
| Iron                   | 1125.0      | 6470.0  |
| Lead                   | 0.01        | 5.2     |
| Magnesium              | 5.7         | 8.8     |
| Manganese              | 6.9         | 29.0    |
| Mercury                | 0.0         | 0.002   |
| Nickel                 | 3.0         | 500.0   |
| Potassium              | 1.4         | 2.3     |
| Selenium               | 0.002       | 0.004   |
| Silver                 | 0.02        | 0.2 b/  |
| Sodium                 | 9.2         | 74.0    |
| Tin                    | 1.0         | 7.3     |
| Zinc                   | 0.9         | 840.0   |

a/ All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

b/ Electric Power Research Institute, Manual For Management of Low-Volume Wastes From Fossil-Fuel-Fired Power Plants, prepared by Radian Corporation, Austin, Texas, July 1987.

Source: All data, unless noted otherwise, are from Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

## EXHIBIT 3-27

**CHARACTERISTICS OF SPENT WATER-SIDE  
ALKALINE PASSIVATING WASTES**

| <u>Parameter</u>       | <u>Range*</u> |             |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                        | <u>Low</u>    | <u>High</u> |
| pH (units)             | 9.2           | 10.0        |
| Total Suspended Solids | 13.0          | 45.0        |
| NH3-N                  | 15.0          | 232.0       |
| Kjeldahl-N             | 97.0          | 351.0       |
| Nitrite-N              | 7.0           | 12.9        |
| BOD5                   | 40.0          | 127.0       |
| COD                    | 98.0          | 543.0       |
| TOC                    | 16.0          | 23.0        |
| Iron                   | 7.5           | 28.0        |
| Chromium               | 0.0           | 0.4         |
| Copper                 | 0.1           | 1.2         |

\* All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

Source: EnviroSphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

The amount of pyrites to be disposed at a power plant can vary considerably, although coal typically contains up to 5 percent pyrites.<sup>36</sup> A 500 megawatt plant, depending on how often it operates and the quality of its coal, will generate, on average, between 30,000 and 100,000 tons of pyrites per year. The characteristics of pyrites and pyrite slurry transport water are shown in Exhibit 3-28.

### **3.3.7 Sump Effluents**

Floor and yard drains collect waste streams from a variety of sources at power plants, such as rainfall, seepage from ground-water sources, leakage, small equipment cleaning operations, and process spills and leaks. As a result, the composition of drain effluents is highly variable. Depending on the particular circumstances at the power plant, these waste streams may contain coal dust, fly ash, oil, and detergents.

The frequency of sump effluent generation and quantities generated are very plant-specific. The more efficient a plant's operating procedures, the smaller this waste stream will be. Also, power plants located in dry areas of the country will have relatively small amounts of wastes collected in yard drains.

## **3.4 SUMMARY**

In the process of generating electricity, coal-fired utility power plants produce a number of waste products. These wastes are produced in large quantities and have widely varying physical and chemical characteristics.



## EXHIBIT 3-28

CHARACTERISTICS OF PYRITES AND  
PYRITE TRANSPORT WATER

| <u>Parameter</u>       | <u>Pyrite Slurry Water</u> <sup>a/</sup> | <u>Pyrites</u> <sup>b/</sup><br><u>Solid Form</u> |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Total Suspended Solids | 1,700.0                                  | --  |
| Total Aluminum         | 93.3                                     | --  |
| Total Calcium          | 134.0                                    | --  |
| Total Iron             | 220.0                                    | --  |
| Total Magnesium        | 13.6                                     | --  |
| Sulfate                | 177.0                                    | --  |
| pH (units)             | 7.7                                      | --  |
| Arsenic                | --                                       | 500-5000  |
| Chromium               | 0.1                                      | --  |
| Copper                 | 0.1                                      | 10-10,000   |
| Lead                   | 0.1                                      | 200-1000  |
| Zinc                   | 0.3                                      | 500-10,000  |
| Manganese              | --                                       | 10-5000   |
| Selenium               | --                                       | 10-100  |
| Silica                 | 212.0                                    | --  |
| Silver                 | --                                       | 10-50   |
| Cobalt                 | --                                       | 100-5000  |
| Nickel                 | --                                       | 10-1000   |
| Vanadium               | --                                       | 100-200   |

a/ All concentrations, unless noted, in milligrams per liter.

b/ All concentrations in parts per million.

Source: EnviroSphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981.

- Coal-fired electric utility power plants produce three major forms of wastes:
  - 1) Ash, formed from the noncombustible material present in coal. There are three types of ash -- fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag;
  - 2) FGD sludge, produced by flue gas desulfurization systems designed to remove sulfur oxides from flue gas; and
  - 3) Low-volume wastes, generated primarily from equipment maintenance and cleaning operations.
- In 1984, about 69 million tons of ash and about 16 million tons of FGD sludge were produced by coal-fired electric utilities. By the year 2000, these wastes are expected to increase to about 120 million and 50 million tons, respectively.
- Several physical characteristics of utility waste determine the waste's behavior during disposal and the potential for leachate problems. These characteristics vary a great deal among the different types of ash and FGD sludge.
- The chemical constituents of ash and FGD sludge largely depend on the chemical components in the coal. Other chemical compounds present in FGD sludge, primarily calcium and sodium salts, are the result of the reactions between the absorbent reagent used and the sulfur oxides in the flue gas.
- Compared with ash and FGD sludge, low-volume wastes are generally produced in much smaller quantities. Many of these wastes contain various chemicals from the cleaning solutions used for power plant operations and maintenance; potentially-hazardous elements in these chemicals may be found at high concentrations in the low-volume waste.

## CHAPTER THREE

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B for a more in-depth discussion of boiler types and how the type of boiler affects the types of waste that are generated.

<sup>2</sup> Babcock & Wilcox, Steam: Its Generation and Use, New York: The Babcock & Wilcox Company, 1978, p. 18-3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Energy Information Administration, Cost and Quality of Fuels for Electric Utility Plants-1985, DOE/EIA-0191(85), July 1986.

<sup>5</sup> ICF Incorporated, Analysis of 6 and 8 Million Ton and 30 Year/NSPS and 30 Year/1.2 Pound Sulfur Dioxide Emission Reduction Cases, prepared for EPA, February 1986. There are many factors that can affect the amount of coal consumed, including electricity growth rates, oil and gas prices, types of technology available, etc. Nevertheless, utilities will continue to burn substantial amounts of coal in the foreseeable future.

<sup>6</sup> Energy Information Administration, Electric Power Annual 1984, DOE/EIA-0348(84), p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> There are presently over 500 coal cleaning plants in the U.S., the majority of which are operated by coal companies and located at the mouth of the mine. The type of cleaning method employed depends upon the size of the coal pieces to be cleaned, a factor that can be controlled at the cleaning plant.

The most widely used methods of coal cleaning are those that use specific gravity, relying on the principle that heavier particles (i.e., impurities) separate from lighter ones (i.e., coal) when settling in fluid. A common method of cleaning coarse coal pieces is to pulse currents of water through a bed of coal in a jig; impurities, such as shale and pyrite, sink, while the coal floats on top. The heavy, or dense, media process is used for cleaning coarse and intermediate-sized pieces. A mixture of water and ground magnetite, having a specific gravity between that of coal and its impurities, acts as a separating fluid. An inclined vibrating platform with diagonal grooves, known as a concentrating table, also is used to clean intermediate-sized coal pieces. Raw coal slurry is fed onto the high end of the table. As the slurry flows down, the vibrations separate the coal from the refuse, allowing the lighter coal to be carried along in the water, while the heavier impurities are trapped in the grooves.

Because of their small size, fine coal particles are very difficult to clean. Their recovery is important, however, because these particles can provide up to 25 percent of the energy derived from raw coal. A popular method of fine coal cleaning is froth flotation. The coal pieces are coated with oil and then agitated in a controlled mixture of water, air, and reagents until froth is formed on the surface. Bubbles tend to attach to the coal pieces, keeping them buoyant, while heavier particles such as pyrite, shale, and slate remain dispersed in the water. The coal can then be removed from the

surface. For more information, see Coal Preparation, 4th edition, Joseph Leonard, editor, American Institute of Mining, Metallurgical, and Petroleum Engineers, Inc., 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Ash melts when heated to a sufficiently high temperature. The temperatures at which the ash changes forms -- e.g., melting from a cone shape to a spherical shape to a hemispherical shape to a flat layer -- are referred to as ash fusion temperatures.

<sup>9</sup> Tetra Tech, Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI EA-3236, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, September 1983, p. 3-4. A micron is 0.001 millimeters.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> The compressibility of a material is measured as the ratio of its height at 50 psi to its original height at atmospheric pressure. The dry density, the ratio of weight to unit volume of the material containing no water, affects permeability and strength, which in turn determine the structural stability of a landfill and the extent of leachate mobility. The optimum moisture content is the moisture content, in percentage terms, at which the material attains its maximum density.

<sup>12</sup> In 1979 the New Source Performance Standards, part of the Clean Air Act of 1971, were revised. The new regulations required that all coal-fired electric utility units with capacity greater than 73 megawatts, whose construction commenced after September 18, 1978, would not only have to meet a 1.2 pound sulfur dioxide per million Btu emission limit, but would have to do so by a continuous system of emissions reduction. New power plants must reduce sulfur dioxide emissions between 70 and 90 percent, depending on the type of coal burned.

<sup>13</sup> During fluidized bed combustion the sulfur oxides react with limestone or dolomite to form calcium sulfate. In LIMB technology, limestone is injected into the boiler, also forming calcium compounds.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Power Commission, The Status of Flue Gas Desulfurization Applications in the United States: A Technological Assessment, July 1977, p. VII-15.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. VII-18.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. VII-23.

<sup>17</sup> Tetra Tech, Inc., Physical-Chemical Characteristics of Utility Solid Wastes, EPRI EA-3236, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, September 1983, p. 4-4.

<sup>18</sup> "Dry Capture of SO<sub>2</sub>," EPRI Journal, March 1984, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>20</sup> ICF, op. cit. See Appendix B for a detailed explanation of how future FGD sludge estimates were derived.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Controlling SO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Coal-Fired Steam-Electric Generators: Solid Waste Impact, Volume I, EPA-600/7-78-044a, March 1978, p. 23.

<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Four for a detailed discussion of the methods of sludge fixation.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., State-of-the-Art of FGD Sludge Fixation, prepared for Electric Power Research Institute, January 1978, p. 2-25.

<sup>24</sup> Tetra Tech, Inc., op. cit., p. 4-17.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981, p. 26.

<sup>27</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Waste and Water Management for Conventional Coal Combustion Assessment Report - 1979; Volume II: Water Management, EPA-600/7-80-012b, March 1980, p. 3-146.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 3-147.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 3-16. About 35 to 40 percent of the total heat input of a power plant is converted to electricity, about 5 percent is lost in the stack gases, and the remaining 55 to 60 percent is rejected in the condenser.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 3-17.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> The term "cooling tower blowdown" refers to the waste waters produced by all recirculating cooling systems, whether they use a cooling pond or a cooling tower.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. EPA, Waste and Water Management, p. 3-19.

<sup>34</sup> Envirosphere Company, Information Responding to EPA's Request Regarding Burning and Co-Treatment/Co-Disposal of Low Volume Wastes Generated at Fossil Fuel Fired Electric Generating Stations, prepared for Utility Solid Waste Activities Group and Edison Electric Institute, August 1981, p. 27.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 28. The term "pyrites" is used to refer to a variety of rock-like substances that may be found in raw coal; it does not just refer to pyritic sulfur that is found in all raw coal, although pyritic sulfur is typically part of the pyrites generated at a power plant.





## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **COAL COMBUSTION WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

Under Section 8002(n) of RCRA, EPA is to analyze "present disposal and utilization practices" and "alternatives to current disposal methods." This chapter addresses these issues by first examining the various state regulations that affect coal combustion disposal since these regulations set the context for current practices. The following section describes coal combustion waste management practices. First, three commonly employed types of land management practices are described in detail. Next, this chapter describes additional measures currently employed by some utilities; more widespread use of these technologies could be employed as an alternative to current practices. Ocean disposal, an alternative that is in the research and development stage, is also addressed in this chapter. Finally, the extent of coal combustion waste recycling as an alternative to disposal is described.

#### **4.1 STATE REGULATION OF COAL COMBUSTION WASTE DISPOSAL**

Since coal combustion wastes are currently exempt from Federal hazardous waste regulation under RCRA, their regulation is primarily carried out under the authority of state hazardous and solid waste laws. State solid waste laws establish programs to provide for the safe management of non-hazardous solid wastes. If solid wastes are considered hazardous, state hazardous waste laws establish programs to provide for their safe management. To implement these laws, state health or environmental protection agencies promulgate solid and hazardous waste regulations. A 1983 report for the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group (USWAG) surveyed these regulations; the USWAG report provided



summaries of state regulations based on applicable state laws, regulations, and interviews with state environmental officials.<sup>1</sup> EPA updated the information provided in the USWAG summaries for the purposes of this report.

Exhibit 4-1 lists the disposal requirements promulgated under each state's solid waste (non-hazardous) regulations. (As will be discussed below, it is very rare for coal combustion wastes to be regulated as hazardous under state regulations.) The list of states is arranged in descending order according to each state's share of national coal-fired generating capacity (Column 1 of Exhibit 4-1). The information shown in the Exhibit is discussed in detail in Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.

#### **4.1.1 State Classification of Coal Combustion Wastes**

Forty-three states have exempted coal combustion wastes from hazardous waste regulation.<sup>2</sup> As a result, in these states the state solid waste laws, which apply to non-hazardous wastes, regulate the disposal of these coal combustion wastes. Column 2 of Exhibit 4-1 shows that: (1) in seven states, coal combustion wastes are not exempt from hazardous waste regulation (indicated by an entry of CH), which means that they are tested to determine whether they will be regulated as solid or hazardous wastes; (2) in all but one of the remaining states wastes are regulated by solid waste regulations (indicated by an entry of SW); and (3) in the one remaining state, wastes are exempt from both the hazardous waste and solid waste regulations (indicated by an entry of EX).

**EXHIBIT 4-1**  
**STATE REGULATIONS GOVERNING COAL COMBUSTION WASTE DISPOSAL**

|                | (1)                                  | (2)            | (3)           | (4)                  | (5)   | (6)                 | (7)                        | (8)                   | (9)                    |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------------|-------|---------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| STATE          | % NATIONAL<br>COAL-FIRED<br>CAPACITY | CLASSIFICATION | PERMITS       | SITE<br>RESTRICTIONS | LINER | LEACHATE<br>CONTROL | GROUND-WATER<br>MONITORING | CLOSURE<br>CONDITIONS | FINANCIAL<br>ASSURANCE |
| Texas          | 8.40%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | MAY                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Indiana        | 6.44%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | MAY                        | NO                    | NO                     |
| Kentucky       | 6.43%                                | CH             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | MAY   | YES                 | MAY                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Ohio           | 6.02%                                | EX             |               |                      |       |                     |                            |                       |                        |
| Pennsylvania   | 5.71%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | MAY                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Illinois       | 5.46%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | YES                   | YES                    |
| West Virginia  | 3.87%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| North Carolina | 3.41%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Michigan       | 3.37%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | YES                        | NO                    | NO                     |
| Georgia        | 3.35%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Florida        | 3.26%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | YES                  | YES   | YES                 | YES                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Missouri       | 3.16%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | MAY                 | NO                         | YES                   | NO                     |
| Alabama        | 3.08%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | MAY   | NO                  | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Tennessee      | 2.54%                                | CH             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | MAY   | NO                  | MAY                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Nevada         | 2.49%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| South Carolina | 2.24%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | YES                 | NO                         | YES                   | NO                     |
| Wisconsin      | 2.19%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | MAY   | MAY                 | MAY                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Louisiana      | 1.98%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | YES   | YES                 | YES                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Colorado       | 1.97%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | YES                  | YES   | YES                 | YES                        | NO                    | NO                     |
| Iowa           | 1.83%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | NO                   | NO    | MAY                 | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Wyoming        | 1.82%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Kansas         | 1.69%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | MAY                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Arizona        | 1.67%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| New Mexico     | 1.58%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Utah           | 1.57%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Minnesota      | 1.54%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | MAY                 | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Arkansas       | 1.48%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | YES                   | YES                    |
| Maryland       | 1.48%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | NO                   | NO    | YES                 | YES                        | NO                    | NO                     |
| North Dakota   | 1.39%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | MAY                 | YES                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Oklahoma       | 1.34%                                | CH             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | YES                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| New York       | 1.24%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | MAY   | MAY                 | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Virginia       | 0.94%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Washington     | 0.93%                                | CH             | OFF SITE      | YES                  | YES   | YES                 | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Nebraska       | 0.85%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | MAY                 | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Montana        | 0.74%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Mississippi    | 0.62%                                | SW             | OFF SITE      | NO                   | MAY   | NO                  | NO                         | YES                   | NO                     |
| New Jersey     | 0.51%                                | CH             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | YES                        | YES                   | YES                    |
| Massachusetts  | 0.41%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | NO                    | NO                     |
| Oregon         | 0.31%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | NO                  | MAY                        | NO                    | YES                    |
| Delaware       | 0.27%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | NO    | YES                 | YES                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| Maine          | 0.15%                                | CH             | ON & OFF SITE | YES                  | YES   | YES                 | MAY                        | YES                   | NO                     |
| South Dakota   | 0.13%                                | SW             | ON & OFF SITE | NO                   | NO    | NO                  | NO                         | YES                   | NO                     |

**EXHIBIT 4-1 (continued)**  
**STATE REGULATIONS GOVERNING COAL COMBUSTION WASTE DISPOSAL**

| STATE         | (1)<br>% NATIONAL<br>COAL-FIRED<br>CAPACITY | (2)<br>CLASSIFICATION | (3)<br>PERMITS | (4)<br>SITE<br>RESTRICTIONS | (5)<br>LINER | (6)<br>LEACHATE<br>CONTROL | (7)<br>GROUND-WATER<br>MONITORING | (8)<br>CLOSURE<br>CONDITIONS | (9)<br>FINANCIAL<br>ASSURANCE |
|---------------|---|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| New Hampshire | 0.12%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | NO                          | NO           | NO                         | YES                               | NO                           | NO                            |
| Alaska        | 0.01%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | YES                         | NO           | NO                         | MAY                               | NO                           | NO                            |
| California    | 0.00%                                       | CH                    | ON & OFF SITE  | YES                         | NO           | YES                        | MAY                               | YES                          | YES                           |
| Connecticut   | 0.00%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | YES                         | NO           | YES                        | YES                               | YES                          | NO                            |
| Vermont       | 0.00%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | NO                          | NO           | NO                         | NO                                | NO                           | NO                            |
| Rhode Island  | 0.00%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | YES                         | NO           | YES                        | YES                               | NO                           | NO                            |
| Hawaii        | 0.00%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | NO                          | NO           | NO                         | NO                                | NO                           | NO                            |
| Idaho         | 0.00%                                       | SW                    | ON & OFF SITE  | NO                          | NO           | MAY                        | NO                                | NO                           | NO                            |

**NOTES**

Column (1) Percent national coal-fired capacity: i.e., each state's share of total U.S. coal-fired generating capacity.

Column (2) Classification: SW - coal combustion waste is exempted from hazardous waste regulation and regulated as a solid waste.

CH - coal combustion waste is not exempted from hazardous waste regulation and is tested for hazardous characteristics (In practice, coal combustion wastes are rarely considered hazardous, therefore columns 3-8 reflect solid, not hazardous, waste regulations).

EX - coal combustion waste is exempted from both solid and hazardous waste regulation.

Column (3) Permits: Permits are required for off-site facilities only, or for both on-site and off-site facilities.

Columns (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9): YES - the disposal standard is imposed by state regulations.

NO - the disposal standard is not imposed by state regulations.

MAY - the regulation states that a case-by-case investigation will determine whether the disposal standard will be imposed.

Source: Wald, Harkrader & Ross, Survey of State Laws and Regulations Governing Disposal of Utility Coal-Combustion Byproducts, prepared for the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group, September, 1983.

Of the seven states that do not exempt coal combustion wastes from hazardous waste regulation (indicated by a CH classification in Exhibit 4-1), California burns little coal to produce electricity. The hazardous waste regulations of the six remaining states -- Kentucky, Tennessee, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Maine, and Washington -- regard coal combustion wastes as "characteristic" waste; that is, the wastes are tested for Extraction Procedure (EP) toxicity (see Chapter Five for further discussion), and if the waste proves to be toxic, some or all sections of state hazardous waste regulations apply. In Kentucky, for example, hazardous waste standards concerning lining and leachate control are enforced for coal combustion wastes that are found to be toxic, but utilities are not required to participate in the hazardous waste management fund established to ensure the long-term viability of disposal facilities. Similarly, according to the hazardous waste regulations of Tennessee and Oklahoma, if a waste is determined to be toxic, strict analysis and monitoring requirements must be followed, but compliance with state hazardous waste design and operating standards is not required. Officials from these five states have indicated that it is very rare for a coal-burning utility's waste to be classified as hazardous.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, state solid waste regulations, with only isolated exceptions, establish the standards applicable to most coal combustion waste disposal activities.

Although solid waste regulations in most states do not differentiate between coal combustion wastes and other solid wastes, solid waste regulations in three states make specific reference to coal combustion waste disposal:

- Ohio's solid waste regulations list "non-toxic fly ash ... and slag ... that are not harmful or inimical to public health" as wastes that are exempt from solid waste regulation. Ash is typically determined to be non-toxic, according to the USWAG report.
- Maine's solid waste regulations provide a separate, more stringent set of design and operating requirements for the disposal of coal combustion wastes. The requirements call for lining, leachate control, and ground-water monitoring at coal combustion waste sites. These standards do not apply to other solid waste disposal facilities.<sup>4</sup>
- Pennsylvania has established industry-specific waste disposal standards. Pennsylvania's regulations for coal combustion waste disposal exclude the leachate control systems and liner requirements that apply to general solid waste disposal facilities.

#### 4.1.2 Requirements for Coal Combustion Waste Disposal

The solid waste regulations of every state require that off-site solid waste disposal facilities be permitted or have some form of official approval. In order to obtain a permit, the operator of a facility must meet the requirements that are outlined in the regulations. These regulations are listed in Exhibit 4-1 and described below:

- The regulations in 41 states require permits for both on-site and off-site facilities. Eight states' regulations explicitly exempt on-site disposal from the permit requirement (Ohio, which exempts coal combustion wastes from solid waste regulation, is not included among the eight states). Column 3 of Exhibit 4-1 shows whether a permit is required for the operation of on-site and off-site solid waste disposal facilities.<sup>5</sup>



- Site restrictions are included in the solid waste regulations of 30 states. Examples of site restrictions are prohibiting solid waste disposal facilities from violating local zoning laws, banning placement of a new facility in a 100-year floodplain, and prohibiting waste placement unless there is a minimum depth to ground water. Column 4, "site restrictions," shows whether a state's regulations include restrictions on a disposal facility's location.
- Five states' regulations (Florida, Louisiana, Colorado, Washington, and Maine) call for all solid waste facilities to have a clay or synthetic liner. In addition, six states' regulations (Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, Wisconsin, New York, and Mississippi) call for the state permitting authority to determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether a liner is required. Column 5, "liners," shows whether the state's regulations include a requirement for liners at solid waste disposal facilities.
- Leachate control systems are collection devices placed under wastes in landfills or impoundments to collect waste leachate. Regulations in 12 states call for leachate control systems in all solid waste disposal facilities; the regulations of an additional 8 states allow leachate control systems to be required on a case-by-case basis. Column 6, "leachate control systems," shows whether a state's regulations include a requirement for leachate control systems at solid waste disposal facilities.
- The solid waste regulations of 17 states call for ground-water monitoring systems at all solid waste disposal facilities. The regulations of an additional 11 states specify that ground-water monitoring may be required on a case-by-case basis. Column 7, "ground-water monitoring," shows whether a state's regulations include requirements for ground-water monitoring wells at solid waste disposal facilities.
- Twenty-six states have solid waste regulations that call for closure and post-closure care. Column 8, "closure conditions," shows whether a state's regulations include requirements for closure and post-closure care for disposal facilities that have ceased operating.



- Thirteen states have solid waste regulations that include a financial assurance requirement. Column 9, "financial assurance," shows whether a state's regulations include a requirement that a solid waste facility operator post a bond or participate in a waste management fund to ensure the long-term viability of safe disposal facilities.

The management of waste in surface impoundments, a common practice for coal-burning utility plants, is often only indirectly addressed by state solid waste regulations. Only six states -- Louisiana, Colorado, New York, Washington, Oregon, and New Hampshire -- have solid waste regulations that include requirements exclusively for surface impoundments. The solid waste regulations of Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, Georgia, and Missouri exclude surface impoundments and defer to state water laws for regulatory authority. The water regulations in these states do not include any design and operating requirements for surface impoundments. However, according to the USWAG report, the water agencies in Missouri do regulate the design and operation of impoundments -- requiring lining and ground-water monitoring. According to the same report, state water agencies in Pennsylvania also regulate the design and operation of surface impoundments.

The regulatory requirements discussed above refer to regulations explicitly promulgated by the states for waste disposal facilities. However, state solid and hazardous waste regulations generally allow state authorities a large degree of discretion in designing site-by-site disposal standards that are more strict than those specified in the solid waste regulations. Many states' regulations allow local governments to design their own waste disposal regulations, provided that the standards set forth in the state solid waste regulations are enforced. Interviews with several state environmental

officials and the summaries in the USWAG report indicate that in some states coal combustion utility wastes are regulated more stringently than what is required by the solid waste regulations. For example, the solid waste regulations in Texas have few design and operating requirements and exempt on-site disposal from the permit requirement. It is, however, the policy of the state environmental agency to provide guidelines for on-site facilities as well as off-site facilities, and to require ground-water monitoring. (For more information on individual state regulations, see Appendix C.)

#### **4.1.3 Summary**

The regulation of coal combustion waste is generally carried out under state solid, not hazardous, waste regulations. These solid waste regulations vary from state to state. Based on the requirements included under each state's solid waste regulations (as shown in Exhibit 4-1), it is difficult to generalize about the extent of state regulation of coal combustion wastes; some states have very stringent regulations and/or policies, such as those that impose design and operating standards and on-site and off-site permit requirements, whereas other states have few requirements or exempt on-site disposal from regulation. For a number of states, requirements are determined on a case-by-case basis. This allows the states to take climatic, geologic, and other site-specific characteristics into account for each waste management facility.

## **4.2 AVAILABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT METHODS AND CURRENT PRACTICES**

There are a variety of methods available for managing coal combustion wastes. Wastes may be land managed in impoundments, landfills, mines, and quarries or may be reused for various purposes. This section describes types of land management of coal combustion wastes and their prevalence within the ten EPA-designated regions of the United States. The second part of the section reviews available waste management technology alternatives (such as lining, leachate collection, and pre-disposal treatment), and explores how these different technologies are currently used in different parts of the U.S. and how these technologies have changed over time. The third part of this section describes the potential for ocean disposal to be used to manage coal combustion wastes. The final section describes coal combustion waste recycling. The waste management methods discussed in this section apply to high-volume and low-volume utility waste streams since these wastes are often co-disposed in the same facility.<sup>6</sup>

### **4.2.1 Land Management of Coal Combustion Wastes**

80 percent of coal combustion waste is treated, stored, and/or disposed by means of land management, with the remaining 20 percent recycled (see Section 4.2.4). This section describes three common methods of land management currently used for coal combustion wastes. It also presents data on use of these management methods geographically and how land management practices have changed over time.

#### 4.2.1.1 Types of Coal Combustion Waste Land Management

Three types of utility waste land management facilities are commonly used today:<sup>7</sup>

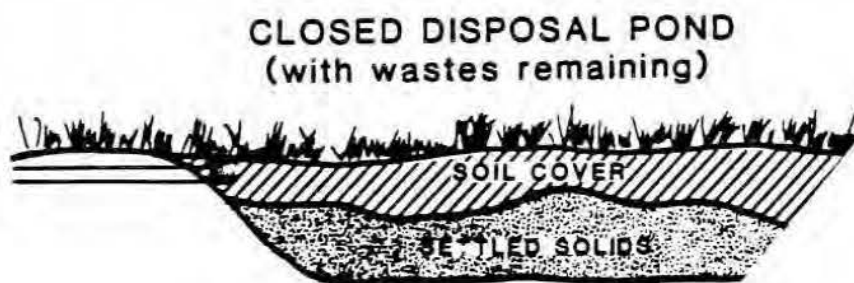
- **Surface Impoundments** -- often called wet ponds, in which coal combustion wastes are disposed as a slurry or sludge, allowing solids to settle and accumulate at the bottom of the pond.
- **Landfills** -- facilities used for disposing of dry or dewatered coal combustion wastes; landfills are typically managed like an earth-moving operation in which the wastes are disposed in the excavated area.
- **Mines and Quarries** -- abandoned pits in which wet or dry wastes are disposed.

##### Surface Impoundments

Surface impoundments are used to treat, store, and dispose of coal combustion wastes. Slurried coal ash and other wastes are introduced into the impoundment; the solids settle out and gradually accumulate at the bottom of the pond, leaving relatively clear water at the surface, which is often discharged to surface water. By using this method, certain types of waste treatment, such as neutralization of acids, can be accomplished concurrently with disposal. Exhibit 4-2 illustrates the different stages in the life of a typical impoundment.

Historically, wet ponding has been one of the most widely used disposal methods for coal ash and FGD wastes because it is simple and easily implemented. In 1983, about 80 percent of the waste management facilities used

EXHIBIT 4-2  
TYPICAL SURFACE IMPOUNDMENT (POND) STAGES



by utilities employed some type of sedimentation treatment pond; most of these treatment ponds were used directly as final disposal impoundments (about 45 percent of all facilities; see section 4.2.1.2). The remainder of the impoundments were used only for treatment and temporary storage of waste, in part to comply with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System established in Section 402 of the Clean Water Act.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, some state and local regulations concerning wet ponds have become more restrictive, requiring liners and ground-water monitoring at these facilities. These types of restrictions will tend to increase wet ponding costs, making it less attractive as a disposal option.<sup>9</sup>

Utilities may use a single pond or a series of ponds to facilitate the settling of solids. Chemicals or different wastes can be added at different points in the ponding system to produce desired chemical reactions, such as metals precipitation or neutralization. Fly ash, bottom ash, and FGD wastes are usually sluiced with water to the impoundments. The ash solids may be allowed to accumulate in a pond until it is full, or the pond may be drained and the solids dredged periodically and taken to an alternative disposal site, such as a landfill.

Pond designs vary widely depending upon local site conditions, the regulations that govern design of the impoundment, and whether bottom ash, fly ash, FGD wastes, or a combination of wastes are to be disposed and/or treated in the ponds. Because utility wastes are generated in large volumes, a pond's total surface area may cover up to several hundred acres, and the initial depth of a pond may be anywhere between 10 and 100 feet.<sup>10</sup> The total



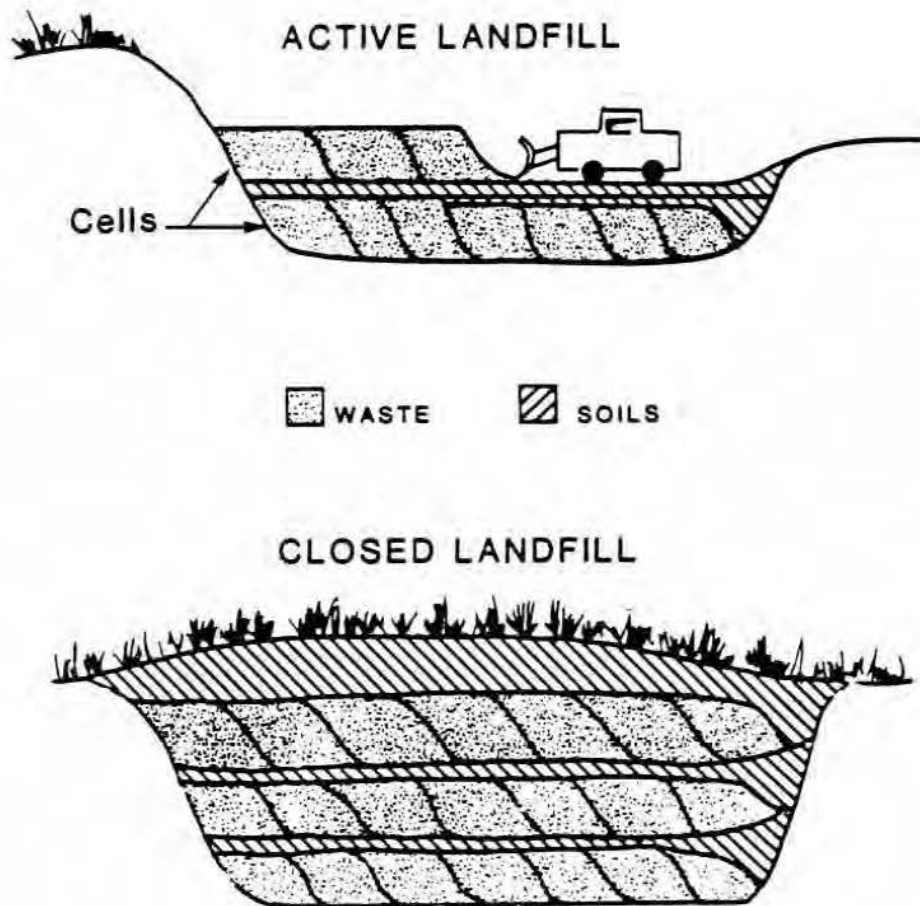
volume of an impoundment system depends on several factors, including the total quantity of ash to be disposed (both dry and slurried volumes), the liquid and solid retention times, the type and degree of treatment performed, and the desired quality of the discharge or effluent. The number of ponds in a system and the specific uses to which each is put can also influence the total volume required for wet ponding.

### **Landfills**

Landfills are used to dispose of coal combustion wastes such as fly ash, bottom ash, and FGD sludges when they are produced or after they are dredged from surface impoundments that are used as interim treatment facilities. The typical design of a landfill during its active stage and after closure is depicted in Exhibit 4-3.

Landfills are constructed in a somewhat similar fashion to surface impoundments. Excavation is required in both cases, but may be ongoing throughout a landfill's active life because most large landfills are divided into sections, or cells, of which only one or two may be active at any given time. A landfill cell is defined as the area (up to several hundred square feet) over which waste is placed to a depth ranging from one to ten feet (industry practice refers to each layer of cells as a lift). Several lifts may be stacked atop one another in the landfill. A cell may be open for periods ranging from a day to a few weeks, after which it is usually covered with six inches to several feet of soil. The waste and soils are often sprinkled with water throughout the fill operation to mitigate potential dust problems.

EXHIBIT 4-3  
DIAGRAMS OF ACTIVE AND CLOSED LANDFILLS



Excavation may be initiated in phases; for example, as one cell is filled, another is prepared for waste placement, while yet another is being excavated. Roads are built in to provide access for waste-hauling equipment as well as for the earth-moving and earth-compacting equipment that prepares the waste after it has been placed in the landfill cell. After a cell is filled, the access road frequently becomes part of the containment system as a wall separating one cell from the next.

Landfilling of coal ash and FGD sludges has increased over the past few years as the costs of wet ponding have increased (see section 4.2.1.2). Most electric utilities that use landfills currently dispose their high-volume wastes in Subtitle D (non-hazardous waste) landfills. Landfills in compliance with RCRA Subtitle C standards may be used occasionally for disposal of small quantities of hazardous waste.<sup>11</sup>

### **Mine and Quarry Disposal**

Some utilities use abandoned mines or quarries as ash and FGD sludge disposal sites. Abandoned mine disposal includes the use of mine shafts as well as strip-mined areas. Wastes disposed to abandoned mine shafts can be dumped into the shaft or carefully placed within the mine to fill the areas remaining after the coal or other material has been removed. Strip-mined areas may be filled like a landfill. Regulatory agencies may consider wastes disposed in this manner to pose less of a threat than the runoff and potential contamination from the abandoned mine itself.<sup>12</sup> In some cases, a chemical reaction between the waste and the mine runoff and leachate might actually

reduce the toxicity of the runoff (for example, an alkaline sludge could neutralize acid mine drainage). However, the likelihood of such a mitigative effect is very site-specific and would not necessarily occur uniformly throughout any given mine disposal site.

In a few cases, utility wastes, particularly acidic wastes, have been disposed in quarries. Limestone quarries are considered the best setting for this type of disposal because they provide a natural acid buffering capacity and the capacity for the metals present in the waste to be attenuated by chemically combining with materials in the quarry.<sup>13</sup> Quarry disposal of wastes works well for lime or limestone slurry wastes, which harden to form a concrete-type floor at the bottom of the quarry, thereby plugging any potential leakage paths. The probability of achieving success with this method must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis prior to its use.

#### **4.2.1.2 Prevalence of Various Land Management Methods**

Use of the waste management methods described above can vary from plant to plant and, in some cases, among individual generating units at a single power plant. This section presents information on how these utility waste management methods are employed nationwide and within EPA regions. It also discusses how these utility waste management methods have changed over time. The emphasis is on surface impoundments and landfills because these two waste management methods are the most commonly-used utility waste management practices in the United States.

The information presented in this section was derived from the Edison Electric Institute Power Statistics Database, currently maintained by the Utility Data Institute. This database contains information on power plant characteristics for all electric utility generating plants in the U.S. These data include number of power plants, number of generating units at each power plant site, type of fuel, plant capacity, as well as other information. It also contains information on the type of waste management methods currently used by power plants throughout the country, including type of disposal facility and whether the wastes were disposed at the power plant or in off-site facilities. Because each generating unit at a power plant may have its own waste management practice, the database gives waste disposal information for all generating units.

Data were not available for all generating units in the database. When information is not available, the extent of data coverage is indicated. In some instances the number of generating units on which no information was available was quite high. Although EPA recognizes the possibility of some statistical bias due to lack of data on some generating units, this database is the most comprehensive source available on utility waste management practices. EPA has no reason to believe that such bias is serious enough to call into question conclusions drawn in this analysis.

Exhibit 4-4 displays, for each of the ten EPA regions of the U.S. (see Exhibit 2-4 for a map of these regions), the number of generating units whose waste is managed in surface impoundments, in landfills, or mines. The most

## EXHIBIT 4-4

**UTILITY WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES BY EPA REGION**  
**(number of generating units) a/**

| <u>EPA Region</u> | <u>Surface<br/>Impoundments</u> | <u>Landfills</u> | <u>Minefills</u> | <u>Other/<br/>Unknown</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1                 | 1                               | 10               | 0                | 7                         | 18           |
| 2                 | 0                               | 22               | 0                | 17                        | 39           |
| 3                 | 33                              | 103              | 1                | 7                         | 144          |
| 4                 | 195                             | 55               | 0                | 45                        | 295          |
| 5                 | 160                             | 198              | 4                | 130                       | 492          |
| 6                 | 19                              | 48               | 2                | 18                        | 87           |
| 7                 | 55                              | 61               | 1                | 32                        | 149          |
| 8                 | 9                               | 56               | 23               | 21                        | 109          |
| 9                 | 11                              | 16               | 0                | 7                         | 34           |
| 10                | 0                               | 9                | 2                | 0                         | 11           |
| U.S. Total        | <u>483</u>                      | <u>578</u>       | <u>33</u>        | <u>284</u>                | <u>1378</u>  |

Source: Utility Data Institute Power Statistics Database

a/ The data are provided by generating unit because each generating unit at a power plant may have its own management facility. A generating unit typically refers to a single boiler, turbine, and generator set at a power plant. A power plant may have more than one generating unit at the site. For the database used here, data were available for 1,378 generating units located at 514 power plants.



common types of facilities used by the electric utility industry are surface impoundments and landfills:

- Landfills are the most common type of disposal facility used. Of the 1,094 generating units for which data were available (for 284 units, type of waste disposal method was unknown), 578 units (about 53 percent) used landfills for waste disposal. Landfills are used throughout the United States, with the largest number (over one-half of all landfills) located in the high coal-consuming, industrialized areas of the East and Midwest (Regions 3 and 5).
- Surface impoundments are also commonly used; approximately 44 percent of the generating units (483 out of 1,094) used this type of management facility. Of the 483 generating units that place wastes in surface impoundments, nearly 75 percent are located in Regions 4 and 5. (In the past, access to abundant, inexpensive supplies of water in these Regions often made it economical to use this management option.)
- Mine disposal is used for about three percent of all generating units (33 units out of 1,094). This disposal technique is used most frequently in the western U.S., particularly Region 8. Power plants in this area are often located at or near the coal mine that is supplying the plant. Since the coal mine is located nearby, disposal of waste in the mine is often economic.

When managing coal combustion wastes, electric utilities may treat, store, or dispose of the wastes at the power plant or at facilities located off-site. EPA could not determine from the data available how far the wastes are transported when managed off-site, although the cost of transporting the wastes would tend to encourage disposal near the power plant. A summary of industry practices is provided in Exhibit 4-5, which shows for each EPA region, by type of facility, whether the wastes are managed on-site or off-site.

## EXHIBIT 4-5

LOCATION OF UTILITY WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES:  
ON-SITE VERSUS OFF-SITE  
(number of generating units)\*

| <u>EPA Region</u>    | <u>On-Site</u> | <u>Off-Site</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 1              | 0               | 0              | 1            |
| Landfills            | 0              | 8               | 2              | 10           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>        | <u>7</u>       | <u>7</u>     |
| Total                | 1              | 8               | 9              | 18           |
| 2                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 0              | 0               | 0              | 0            |
| Landfills            | 3              | 18              | 1              | 22           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>        | <u>17</u>      | <u>17</u>    |
| Total                | 3              | 18              | 18             | 39           |
| 3                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 25             | 3               | 5              | 33           |
| Landfills            | 62             | 37              | 4              | 103          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>1</u>        | <u>7</u>       | <u>8</u>     |
| Total                | 87             | 41              | 16             | 144          |
| 4                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 186            | 4               | 5              | 195          |
| Landfills            | 26             | 8               | 21             | 55           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>        | <u>45</u>      | <u>45</u>    |
| Total                | 212            | 12              | 71             | 295          |
| 5                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 141            | 5               | 14             | 160          |
| Landfills            | 41             | 140             | 17             | 198          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>6</u>        | <u>128</u>     | <u>134</u>   |
| Total                | 182            | 151             | 159            | 492          |
| 6                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 18             | 0               | 1              | 19           |
| Landfills            | 36             | 3               | 9              | 48           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>6</u>        | <u>14</u>      | <u>20</u>    |
| Total                | 54             | 9               | 24             | 87           |

## EXHIBIT 4-5 (continued)

LOCATION OF UTILITY WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES:  
ON-SITE VERSUS OFF-SITE  
(number of generating units)\*

| <u>EPA Region</u>    | <u>On-Site</u> | <u>Off-Site</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 7                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 42             | 0               | 13             | 55           |
| Landfills            | 20             | 26              | 15             | 61           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>7</u>       | <u>1</u>        | <u>25</u>      | <u>33</u>    |
| Total                | 69             | 27              | 53             | 149          |
| 8                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 6              | 2               | 1              | 9            |
| Landfills            | 28             | 11              | 17             | 56           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>2</u>       | <u>23</u>       | <u>19</u>      | <u>44</u>    |
| Total                | 36             | 36              | 37             | 109          |
| 9                    |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 9              | 2               | 0              | 11           |
| Landfills            | 16             | 0               | 0              | 16           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>        | <u>7</u>       | <u>7</u>     |
| Total                | 25             | 2               | 7              | 34           |
| 10                   |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 0              | 0               | 0              | 0            |
| Landfills            | 5              | 4               | 0              | 9            |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>2</u>        | <u>0</u>       | <u>2</u>     |
| Total                | 5              | 6               | 0              | 11           |
| Total U.S.           |                |                 |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 428            | 16              | 39             | 483          |
| Landfills            | 237            | 255             | 86             | 578          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>9</u>       | <u>39</u>       | <u>269</u>     | <u>317</u>   |
| Total                | 674            | 310             | 394            | 1378         |

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\* The data are provided by generating unit because each generating unit at a power plant may have its own management facility. A generating unit typically refers to a single boiler, turbine, and generator set at a power plant. A power plant may have more than one generating unit at the site. For the database used here, data were available for 1,378 generating units located at 514 power plants.

- Nearly 70 percent of all generating units in the U.S. manage their coal combustion wastes on-site (based on information for 984 units, 674 units dispose on-site). About two-thirds of the on-site facilities are surface impoundments; most of the other on-site facilities are landfills.
- Landfills are used for about 95 percent of all off-site disposal in the U.S. This is not surprising considering that surface impoundments are typically used when wastes are transported as a wet slurry; the cost of disposal could become prohibitive if a utility transported the slurry off-site.
- Coal combustion waste management practices also differ by region:
  - In the Northeast (Regions 1 and 2), where few coal-fired generating units are located, management tends to occur off-site in landfills.
  - The highest percentage of on-site management is found in the South (Region 4), where about 95 percent of all units manage their waste on-site (212 units, based on information from 224 units). On-site management is common because utilities in this region often use surface impoundments, which are typically located at the power plant.
  - In the Rockies and northern Great Plains area (Region 8), most of the off-site disposal (23 of 36 units) occurs in mines that are generally adjacent to the power plant.

These trends in utility waste management methods have been changing in recent years, with a shift towards greater use of disposal in landfills located on-site. For example, for generating units built since 1975, nearly 65 percent currently dispose of coal combustion wastes in landfills, compared with just over 50 percent for units constructed before 1975. Similarly, over 80 percent of all units built since 1975 use

on-site management facilities, compared with just under 65 percent of all units built before 1975 that manage wastes on-site.

#### **4.2.2 Alternative Waste Management Technologies**

Section 4.2.1 described the types of land management facilities used by utilities and patterns of use. This section describes the additional technologies that utilities may employ at the facilities described above in order to reduce potential environmental risk associated with waste management. For example, some utilities use liner systems for impoundments and landfills, leachate collection systems, and ground-water monitoring systems to control and monitor waste constituent migration. Pre-treatment technologies, by altering physical and chemical properties, can also render wastes more amenable for certain disposal methods. This section also presents data on the prevalence of these various technologies. The alternative technologies discussed in this section, although not necessarily the same as technologies required for RCRA Subtitle C facilities, may be required by current state regulations (described in Section 4.1) and could be more widely used in the future to further mitigate potential environmental impacts at utility waste disposal sites not currently employing these technologies.

##### **4.2.2.1 Installation of Liners**

Until recently, most surface impoundments and landfills used for utility waste management have been simple, unlined systems. Lining is

becoming a more common practice, however, as concern over potential ground-water contamination from "leaky ponds" and, to a lesser extent, from landfills has increased. Some waste management facilities use one or more impermeable synthetic liners; some are lined with one or more layers of low-permeable clay<sup>14</sup>; and some use a combination of clay and synthetic liners.

### **Synthetic Liners**

Several dozen manufacturers and distributors supply impermeable synthetic liners. The most common materials of construction for these liners include polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and high-density polyethylene (HDPE), although several other impermeable synthetics have also been used. Liners may be reinforced with fibers to increase strength and decrease the likelihood of punctures. The liners can be purchased in standard thicknesses that range from 10 mils to 100 mils,<sup>15</sup> or can be made to order. Most liner installations will include protective geotextile fabric above and/or below the impermeable synthetic liner to minimize further the potential for puncture.

Preparation of the site prior to installation of a synthetic liner is similar to that which occurs before clay liner construction. However, more care must be taken to smooth out the surfaces to eliminate any peaks and cavities on the disposal facility floor that could cause a puncture of the liner material. Consequently, surface preparation costs are greater than those for clay liners. Excavation costs are usually less, however,



because the thinner synthetic liners allow shallower excavation (i.e., the additional excavation required to install a clay liner that is several feet thick can be avoided if a much thinner synthetic liner is installed).

The liner itself, which comes rolled or folded in large pieces, is laid in the field and sealed along the seams by heat or solvent fusion techniques; the seams may be field tested at spot checkpoints. The liner is usually covered with a foot or more of soil to protect it from puncture and to keep it in place during construction of the disposal facility. The edges of the liner at the tops of the dikes or landfill cell walls must be well secured to prevent the liner from pulling out and shifting due to the mass of the wastes placed in the impoundment or landfill. Some facilities are double lined and often contain a leachate collection system located in a soil or sand layer between the two liners.

Among the limitations to the use of synthetic liners is their susceptibility to tear and puncture. This is of particular concern in a single-lined impoundment because of the opportunity for liquids to seep through a single tear. Synthetic liners are also susceptible to degradation by certain waste materials. Acidic wastes, for example, can degrade some synthetic liner materials. As with clay liners, waste/liner compatibility testing should be performed to ensure that the disposed wastes will not weaken or permeate the liner. Additionally, because the seams of a synthetic liner are frequently weaker than the liner itself, they may pull apart under stress (e.g., large mass loadings or wave

action). Finally, dredging of synthetically-lined impoundments must be done cautiously, sometimes at very significant expense.

Synthetic liners, unlike clay liners (described below), are impermeable. Another advantage is the ease of repairing an exposed, damaged impoundment liner. A tear or puncture can be patched and seamed, and an impoundment put back into service, relatively quickly. (To repair subsurface damage, however, the impoundment must be wholly or partially drained.) Another advantage to using synthetic liners is that because of manufacturer quality control, a facility owner can be fairly certain that each liner sheet is as impermeable as the next. Clay is expensive to transport and in areas of the country where clay soils are scarce, a synthetic liner system may prove to be the less expensive option.

### **Clay Liners**

The installation of a clay liner in a surface impoundment or landfill entails several steps. First, the site must be excavated or graded to a level below the design elevation of the facility floor. Many facilities take advantage of natural low areas or abandoned ponds to minimize excavation costs. The excavated earth can be used to build up the dike walls for the impoundment or to build containing berms within the landfill. Occasionally, soil must be brought to the construction site to raise the dikes to the design height.

Once the floor and dikes or berms have been prepared, the clay liner is laid in 6- to 9-inch lifts; its final thickness will be between 1 foot and 8 feet. Each lift is individually compacted before the next one is laid, thereby providing effective compaction and minimizing leakage potential. Field testing of the clay for permeability and other pertinent characteristics is sometimes performed during construction to provide quality assurance. Before the impoundment or landfill can be used, the liner is visually inspected for flaws; non-contaminated water may also be piped to the pond to assure that the liner is sufficiently impermeable.

One of the primary concerns about the use of clay liners is whether the entire clay liner meets thickness and permeability requirements. If weather conditions during liner construction are arid and hot, the liner may dry out and crack, causing localized areas of leakage. If conditions are wet or the clay is too moist, clay compaction may never be sufficient to achieve the necessary low permeability. The clays used as liner materials vary in the degree to which they are compatible with the wastes placed in the facility. Laboratory tests, in which the proposed liner material is exposed to the wastes intended for management, should be conducted for each facility to ensure that components of the waste material will not unduly alter the permeability of the clay used as liner material. If the chemical characteristics of the generated waste were to change over time, then the tests would need to be repeated to determine what effect the altered waste stream would have on the clay liner.

An advantage of clay liners is their potential for chemical, particularly cation, attenuation. The chemical structure of clay allows its use as an exchange site for metallic cations and other ions that might gradually seep out of the facility. Such exchange further reduces the opportunities for migration of waste constituents to the ground water. For facilities with fairly ready access to clays, the capital and construction costs associated with the use of a clay liner, even one that is several feet thick, may be substantially lower than those associated with the use of a synthetic liner.

#### **Composite Liners**

Many waste management facilities in industries currently subject to RCRA Subtitle C requirements are installing liner systems that combine both clay liner and synthetic liner technologies. Most commonly, an impoundment or landfill will be lined with 2-4 feet of impermeable clay, which is then prepared for placement of a synthetic liner. The synthetic liner may be covered with 1-2 feet of sand to serve as drainage for a leak detection system. Some facilities may then add another 1- to 2-foot layer of clay, which is again prepared for placement of the upper synthetic liner. In landfills, another leachate collection system is usually placed above this upper liner.

The composite synthetic/clay liner system offers a combination of advantages over single-material liners. A composite liner has some of the advantages provided by synthetic liners, such as factory quality control

and ease of repair (for the upper liner), as well as the advantage of clay's propensity for attenuating escaped ions. Furthermore, use of multiple-liner materials reduces the likelihood that waste material will leak into the ground water because of chemical incompatibility between a waste and a single liner material. In general, the more layers of impermeable liner material that are used, the more efficient containment of liquids will be, thus reducing the likelihood of a release of waste material.

The biggest drawback of the composite synthetic/clay liner system is the cost of installation. Utility waste landfills are very large (up to 100 acres or more), and a liner large enough to cover such a area could be very expensive. In areas where labor costs are high and clay is unavailable locally and must be transported long distances, these costs would be magnified.

#### **Frequency of Liner Use**

Some electric utilities have installed liners to retard the flow of leachate from the waste disposal facility to the surrounding area. Exhibit 4-6 shows the extent to which electric utilities are currently using this technology.

- About 25 percent of all generating units in the U.S. for which data were available (139 of 580 units) have installed some type of liner. There are no available data on the material used to construct these liners or if more than one liner has been installed at the disposal facility.

## EXHIBIT 4-6

**INSTALLATION OF LINERS FOR LEACHATE CONTROL  
AT UTILITY WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES  
(number of generating units)\***

| <u>EPA Region</u>    | <u>Unlined</u> | <u>Lined</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 0              | 0            | 1              | 1            |
| Landfills            | 0              | 0            | 10             | 10           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>7</u>       | <u>7</u>     |
| Total                | 0              | 0            | 18             | 18           |
| 2                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 0              | 0            | 0              | 0            |
| Landfills            | 1              | 14           | 7              | 22           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>17</u>      | <u>17</u>    |
| Total                | 1              | 14           | 24             | 39           |
| 3                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 17             | 2            | 14             | 33           |
| Landfills            | 17             | 7            | 79             | 103          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>8</u>       | <u>8</u>     |
| Total                | 34             | 9            | 101            | 144          |
| 4                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 153            | 3            | 39             | 195          |
| Landfills            | 14             | 7            | 34             | 55           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>45</u>      | <u>45</u>    |
| Total                | 167            | 10           | 118            | 295          |
| 5                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 90             | 20           | 50             | 160          |
| Landfills            | 64             | 31           | 103            | 198          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>4</u>     | <u>130</u>     | <u>134</u>   |
| Total                | 154            | 55           | 283            | 492          |
| 6                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 7              | 7            | 5              | 19           |
| Landfills            | 11             | 17           | 20             | 48           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>20</u>      | <u>20</u>    |
| Total                | 18             | 24           | 45             | 87           |



## EXHIBIT 4-6 (continued)

**INSTALLATION OF LINERS FOR LEACHATE CONTROL  
AT UTILITY WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES  
(number of generating units)\***

| <u>EPA Region</u>    | <u>Unlined</u> | <u>Lined</u> | <u>Unknown</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 7                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 30             | 4            | 21             | 55           |
| Landfills            | 7              | 4            | 50             | 61           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>6</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>27</u>      | <u>33</u>    |
| Total                | 43             | 8            | 98             | 149          |
| 8                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 4              | 0            | 5              | 9            |
| Landfills            | 12             | 6            | 38             | 56           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>44</u>      | <u>44</u>    |
| Total                | 16             | 6            | 87             | 109          |
| 9                    |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 2              | 9            | 0              | 11           |
| Landfills            | 2              | 4            | 10             | 16           |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>7</u>       | <u>7</u>     |
| Total                | 4              | 13           | 17             | 34           |
| 10                   |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 0              | 0            | 0              | 0            |
| Landfills            | 4              | 0            | 5              | 9            |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>0</u>       | <u>0</u>     | <u>2</u>       | <u>2</u>     |
| Total                | 4              | 0            | 7              | 11           |
| Total U.S.           |                |              |                |              |
| Surface Impoundments | 303            | 45           | 135            | 483          |
| Landfills            | 132            | 90           | 356            | 578          |
| Other/Unknown        | <u>6</u>       | <u>4</u>     | <u>307</u>     | <u>317</u>   |
| Total                | 441            | 139          | 798            | 1378         |

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\* The data are provided by generating unit because each generating unit at a power plant may have its own waste management facility. A generating unit typically refers to a single boiler, turbine, and generator set at a power plant. A power plant may have more than one generating unit at the site. For the database used here, data were available for 1378 generating units located at 514 power plants.

- Based on the information available, landfills are more likely to be lined than surface impoundments. Of the 222 generating units that use landfills and that indicated whether the disposal facility was lined or not, about 40 percent (90 units) have lined disposal facilities. Only 13 percent of surface impoundments have liners installed (based on information from 348 of the 483 units).

The information in Exhibit 4-6 should be interpreted cautiously since data were available for only 42 percent of the population (580 units of 1,378 units). One of the reasons this information is unavailable is due to the number of electric utilities that dispose of coal combustion wastes off-site. In many of these cases, the utility does not know whether the off-site disposal facility is lined or not since the utility does not run the disposal operation.

Liner use has been increasing in recent years. Before 1975, less than 20 percent of all generating units managed their coal combustion wastes in lined facilities. For units constructed since 1975, however, this percentage has increased to over 40 percent. The proportion of lined management facilities is particularly high at generating units that produce FGD sludge; since 1975 about 60 percent of management facilities containing these wastes have been lined.

#### **4.2.2.2 Leachate Collection and Ground-Water Monitoring**

Any lined management facility may have a leachate collection system and any facility (lined or unlined) may be equipped with a ground-water monitoring system. Leachate collection systems are used to prevent the

migration of contamination from a landfill or impoundment. Both systems can be used to monitor the rate and extent of contaminant migration. The design and placement of ground-water monitoring and leachate collection systems should take into account the manner in which a landfill or impoundment might potentially interfere with natural ground-water flow and usage patterns.

In surface impoundments, the leachate collection system(s) can be placed below the entire liner system or it can be placed between any two liners. Leachate collection systems typically consist of a drainage media (coarse sand and/or gravel) and perforated pipes (called riser pipes) that slope toward a collection sump. The collected leachate is pumped out via these riser pipes to the surface for treatment and/or disposal. If the riser pipes through which the leachate is pumped perforate the synthetic or clay liner, tight seals are necessary to ensure that the leachate does not escape through the perforation.

In landfills, leachate control systems can be installed below all liners (this is usually called a pressure relief system), between liners (the inter-liner leachate control system), and/or above the upper liner. The floors of a landfill cell are designed to slope to the leachate collection sumps and are usually covered with a drainage media such as sand or gravel. Each leachate control system has its own collection sump, which is emptied through riser pipes so that the leachate can be treated or disposed appropriately. As with impoundment liner systems, riser pipes, if they pierce the liners, must be sealed to prevent leakage.

Ground-water monitoring wells are placed at strategic locations to facilitate early detection of any contaminants that escape the facility and migrate to the ground water. The design and placement of the monitoring wells is based on site-specific hydrogeological assessments, soil chemistry, specific regulatory directives, and other physical and chemical factors. Downgradient wells typically are used to monitor the extent of contamination arising from a facility, and upgradient "background" wells are installed to serve as controls.

Most newer utility waste management facilities have ground-water monitoring systems, and many also have leachate collection systems. In other industries, permitted facilities subject to Subtitle C regulations are required by law to have both ground-water monitoring and leachate collection systems.<sup>16</sup> For utility waste disposal sites, it is estimated that about 15 percent of all facilities have leachate collection systems and about 35 percent have ground-water monitoring systems.<sup>17</sup>

#### **4.2.2.3 Pre-disposal Treatment**

Facilities employ a variety of waste treatment processes to alter the physical or chemical characteristics of wastes so that they will be compatible with the disposal method used. Treatment methods may also be employed to comply with the effluent limitations established under the Clean Water Act.

### **Sludge Dewatering**

The most commonly used pre-disposal treatment process is sludge dewatering. This process is often necessary so that the sludge can be more easily handled and of a consistency suitable for landfill disposal. This procedure can also be used for any wet coal ash or combined coal ash/FGD sludge wastes. Most frequently, sludge dewatering is accomplished by sedimentation of the suspended solids in surface impoundments or, in some cases, in clarification tanks. This type of dewatering is carried out at 80 percent of the utilities.<sup>18</sup>

After the waste solids have had sufficient time to settle, the water layer is drawn off the tank or impoundment and is either discharged subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits or recycled back to the plant as sluice or cooling water. The sludge layer containing the solid ash and other particles is allowed to accumulate for several months (or longer), and is finally dredged after the pond is drained. With this process, the solids content (initially between 5 and 15 percent by weight) can be increased to between 30 and 60 percent. The final solids content in the sludge is affected by the sedimentation impoundment or tank design, the initial solids content, the liquid and solids retention times, and the physical and chemical characteristics of the solid particles.

Even after dewatering, the settled sludges often have a mud-like consistency and still contain so much free liquid that they are

inappropriate for landfill disposal. In this case, the sludge may be further dewatered by natural or mechanical processes. In arid and semi-arid areas, the sludges may be retained in the impoundments until natural evaporation removes still more water. Sludges may also be placed on drying beds made of screens, sand, or other drainage media designed to allow water to percolate out by gravity, while the solids are retained. In mechanical sludge dewatering, belt or vacuum filters, filter presses, thermal dryers, or other processes are used. Ten percent of the utilities use some sort of filtration to dewater sludges.<sup>19</sup> For high-volume sludges, however, mechanical dewatering equipment may be expensive and inconvenient to operate.

### **Reagent Addition**

Most FGD sludges and some other wet sludges can be rendered less chemically reactive and/or more structurally stable by adding solidification, stabilization, or fixation reagents. This practice is not widespread; less than 10 percent of the utilities report using these processes.<sup>20</sup> Solidification agents, such as sawdust or soil, absorb the liquid in a sludge but do not chemically react with the sludge. Stabilization and fixation reagents chemically react with some portion of the sludge -- either the water, the dissolved solids, the particulate solids, or some combination of the three-- and, in some cases, may render potentially hazardous material non-hazardous as a result. All of these processes result in an increased volume of waste that contains less free water and is easier to handle than the original waste stream. An



additional benefit is an increase in the structural integrity (shear stress and load-bearing potential; see Chapter Three for discussion of these characteristics) of the waste material so that it may be placed in deeper disposal facilities and covered with more material.

### **Low-volume Waste Treatment**

The major methods available for low-volume waste management and treatment include:

- co-disposal;
- contract disposal;
- evaporation;
- incineration;
- neutralization;
- physical/chemical treatment; and
- recycle/reuse.

The type of waste management method used most often depends on the type of low-volume waste stream. Exhibit 4-7 shows the treatment process commonly used for each low volume waste stream. Each of these treatment processes is discussed briefly below.

## EXHIBIT 4-7

SUMMARY OF CURRENT HANDLING, TREATMENT AND  
DISPOSAL OF LOW VOLUME WASTES

| Low Volume Waste             | Treatment   | Predominant Disposal Method  |
|------------------------------|---|--|
| Waterside Cleaning Waste     | If organic chelating agents are used, this stream can be incinerated. If acids are used, the stream is often neutralized and precipitated with lime and flocculants.                    | 1. Co-disposal with high volume wastes in pond or landfill following treatment.<br>2. Disposal by paid contractor. |
| Fireside Cleaning Waste      | Sometimes neutralized and precipitated. For coal-fired plants most often diverted to ash ponds without treatment. If metals content is high, chemical coagulation and settling is used. | 1. Co-disposal with high volume wastes in pond without treatment.<br>2. Ponding following treatment.               |
| Air Preheater Cleaning Waste | Settling in ash pond; neutralized and coagulated if combined with other streams before treatment.   | 1. Co-disposal in pond without treatment.<br>2. Ponding with treatment.  |
| Coal Pile Runoff             | Neutralized by diverting to alkaline ash pond. Fine coal material caught in perimeter ditch is often diverted back to coal pile.  | 1. Co-disposal of sludge in landfill after treatment.<br>2. Co-disposal in ash pond.                               |
| Wastewater Treatment         | Usually ponded with ash or as a separate waste. Sometimes solids co-disposed with bottom ash.   | 1. Ponding<br>2. Landfilling   |
| Make-up Water Treatment      | usually co-disposed in ash pond.  | 1. Co-disposal in pond.  |
| Cooling Tower Basin Sludge   | Very little survey or literature information; infrequent stream. Sludge comingled with wastewater treatment sludge.   | 1. Landfilling   |

## EXHIBIT 4-7 (Continued)

SUMMARY OF CURRENT HANDLING, TREATMENT AND  
DISPOSAL OF LOW VOLUME WASTES

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| Low Volume<br>Waste          | Treatment  | Predominant Disposal<br>Method |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Demineralizer<br>Regenerants | Equalized in tanks, then comingled<br>into ash ponds.            | 1. Ponding                     |
| Pyrite Wastes                | Disposed in landfills with bottom<br>ash or diverted to ash pond | 1. Ponding<br>2. Landfilling   |

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Source: EPRI, Characterization of Utility Low-Volume Wastes, prepared by  
Radian Corporation, Austin, Texas, May 1985.

-- Co-Disposal

Co-disposal of low-volume wastes with high-volume wastes into landfills and surface impoundments is commonly used in the utility industry. A January 1981 EPA letter (the Dietrich memorandum) currently allows co-disposal of low-volume wastes with high-volume wastes in landfills and surface impoundments.<sup>21</sup> In a 1985 EPRI study on low-volume waste management, about three-fourths of the power plants interviewed co-disposed some low-volume wastes in a surface impoundment or landfill.<sup>22</sup> The amount of treatment necessary before co-disposal varies with the waste stream. Solid wastes are typically disposed directly into the waste management facility. Liquid wastes are often routed to an interim treatment surface impoundment. Once in the surface impoundment, evaporation occurs and the remaining sludge is landfilled. If the liquid waste is chemically treated before ponding, heavy metals are often removed in a treatment facility; the treated liquid may then be reused or diverted to a surface impoundment while the residue from the treatment process is disposed in a landfill.

-- Contract Disposal

Many utilities hire outside contractors to treat and dispose of low-volume wastes. Contract disposal is most common for low-volume waste streams produced intermittently that are difficult to treat on-site. For example, hydrochloric acid boiler cleaning waste typically requires neutralization with high dosages of a caustic material. Construction of an on-site treatment system for this waste stream requires a large capital investment, although boiler cleaning wastes are produced only over a few hours once every two to five years. As a result, some

utilities (7 of 22 power plants surveyed in EPRI's 1985 study) employ outside contractors when boiler cleaning is required.<sup>23</sup> The treated boiler cleaning waste is then co-disposed on-site or disposed of off-site.

Contract disposal is also a common waste management practice for spent ion exchange resin. In EPRI's 1985 study, of five power plants responding, four plants hauled these wastes off-site while one power plant co-disposed the waste on-site.<sup>24</sup>

#### -- Evaporation

Evaporation ponds are used to dispose of high concentration, low-volume liquid wastes. Prior to final disposal, liquid wastes are diverted to an evaporation pond, generally shallow ponds with a large surface area. The sludge remaining after most of the water evaporates is then dredged and disposed of in a landfill.

#### -- Incineration

Incineration of low-volume wastes includes injection into the boiler or mechanical evaporation. This method of disposal is most common with organic cleaning wastes (Ethylenediamide tetracetic acid (EDTA) or citrate waste). A 1987 EPRI study<sup>25</sup> examined the effect of incinerating EDTA and citrate wastes in a utility boiler. The findings showed that the additional metals contributed were minimal compared to the amount contributed by the coal.

Two of the twenty-two power plants interviewed in EPRI's 1985 study use this method of waste disposal.<sup>26</sup>

-- Neutralization

Acidic or alkaline wastes can be treated with either strong bases or acids, respectively, to produce a near neutral stream. For example, wastewaters, demineralizer regenerant, and coal pile runoff must typically be within a pH range of 6.0 to 9.0 to meet Clean Water Act (CWA) and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) limits. Neutralization can be used to achieve these levels. Similarly, hydrochloric acid boiler cleaning waste, which may have a pH below 2.0, can undergo neutralization to raise the pH above RCRA corrosivity guidelines (pH values between 2.0 and 12.5 are not considered corrosive under RCRA).<sup>27</sup>

-- Other Physical/Chemical Treatment

Physical and/or chemical treatment systems can be used for reducing and removing dissolved and suspended contaminants from aqueous streams. The most prevalent treatments incorporate pH adjustment (i.e., addition of basic or acidic materials), precipitation (i.e., separating solids from solution or suspension), flocculation (i.e., aggregation of fine suspended particles), clarification (i.e., separating liquid and suspended solids) and filtration (i.e., trapping suspended solids). The continuous waste streams are treated to allowable levels. Boiler chemical cleaning and fireside cleaning wastes require higher reagent doses and occasionally additional



processing to meet Clean Water Act (CWA) and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) discharge limits for metals. Ten of the 15 power plants questioned in EPRI's 1985 study route boiler cleaning wastes through physical and/or chemical treatment systems prior to discharge.<sup>28</sup>

#### -- Reuse

Reuse is a common practice for many water-based low volume wastes, especially in water-limited regions of the country. For example, less contaminated streams (boiler blowdown, yard drains) can be used without treatment in cooling towers, ash handling systems, and flue gas desulfurization systems. Other wastes, such as boiler cleaning wastes and coal pile runoff, cannot easily be reused because they require extensive treatment prior to reuse. If a power plant does decide to treat these waste streams, the liquid portion of treated waste may be reused while the sludges produced during treatment are typically landfilled.

#### 4.2.3 Ocean Disposal

Many different types of wastes, including industrial and municipal wastes, have been disposed at sea in the past, although the use of this method for disposing coal combustion wastes is only in the research and development phase. Typically, industrial and municipal wastes are shipped out to sea and disposed at any of several regulated dump sites, which are located anywhere from 20 miles to over 100 miles off the shore line. Another method of ocean disposal (seldom used, however) involves pumping or

gravity feeding wastes through a pipeline that feeds directly from the land-based waste generating site or dump site into the ocean. When the wastes reach the final oceanic disposal site, they either dissolve and disperse or form a manmade reef.

The 1972 Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA), EPA regulations regarding ocean disposal,<sup>29</sup> and the London Dumping Convention currently regulate ocean dumping with respect to the solids content, metals content, and toxicity of wastes considered for this method of disposal.

#### **4.2.4 Waste Utilization and Recovery of Various Waste By-Products**

Although the majority of the waste generated by coal-fired electric utilities is land disposed, a substantial percentage is recovered and reused. From 1970 to 1980, an average of 18 percent of all coal ash generated annually was utilized;<sup>30</sup> from 1980 to 1985, the average coal ash utilization rate exceeded 22 percent, with utilization in 1985 over 27 percent of all coal ash produced.<sup>31</sup> The amount of FGD sludge waste utilized is less than one percent of the total volume of FGD waste generated, although more efficient FGD sludge recovery and utilization processes currently being developed by the utility industry may increase this use. The combined utilization rate for all high-volume coal combustion wastes, i.e., fly ash, bottom ash, boiler slag, and FGD sludge, was about 21 percent in 1985.

The recovery processes are usually performed at the power plant. Use of the recycled waste may occur on-site or the recycled product may be sold for off-site use. Like any industrial product, the wastes to be recycled may be accumulated on-site prior to sale and delivery.

The recovery processes and the uses for waste by-products are numerous and quite varied:

- Bottom ash currently has the highest rate of utilization at 33 percent. It is used as blasting grit, road and construction fill material,<sup>32</sup> for roofing granules, and has other miscellaneous uses.
- Fly ash utilization is substantial. About 17 percent of fly ash production is used for concrete admixture, cement additives, grouting, road and construction fill material,<sup>33</sup> and for miscellaneous other uses.
- FGD wastes are not heavily utilized in the industry (less than 1 percent), but some utilities have the capacity to recover sulfur,<sup>34</sup> sulfuric acid, or other sulfur products from the waste.
- Some low-volume wastes (particularly solvents) that are segregated from the high-volume waste streams are potentially recoverable or available for other uses.
- Numerous other recovery processes and utilization techniques are currently in the research and development phase. At this time, however, the Agency is unaware of any advances in recovery processes that will significantly change the proportion of coal combustion wastes that are disposed.

### Coal Ash

There are a variety of different options currently available for the utilization of fly ash, bottom ash, and boiler slag from coal-fired electric

utilities. All types of coal ash are appropriate for use as construction materials, as cement additives, and for several other uses. Coal ash utilization is primarily centered in the southeast and north central United States.<sup>35</sup>

Most fly ash and some bottom ash exhibit pozzolanic (bonding) properties -- that is, the dried materials are cohesive and exhibit high shear strength and compressive load-bearing characteristics. These properties make ash an appropriate substitute for portland cement for many applications, including concrete production, standard cement production, and for special uses such as for the production of road base cement or even grouting.

Cement made with fly ash may be preferable to regular portland cement for some applications. One of the key benefits is the absence of heat release while the concrete or cement mixture cures; this absence of heat generation means that the design structural strength is more likely to be achieved. However, the use of fly ash and bottom ash as cement substitutes is limited because of the wide variability in ash composition, even in ash originating from the same coal supply or utility. The presence of metals in the ash can reduce the structural integrity of the final concrete by preventing the necessary chemical bonding. The presence of large quantities of sulfates or nitrates will also interfere with the pozzolanic properties. Because of this bonding interference, fly ash and bottom ash are thought to be able to replace no more than 20 percent of the cement used (or about 15 million tons of ash annually).<sup>36</sup> Improvements in utilization techniques may reduce the bonding interference and increase the reutilization potential of

fly ash; however, the Agency is unaware of technical advances at this time that will allow substantially greater utilization in cement applications.

Fly ash and bottom ash are also commonly used as high-volume fill for various construction materials. The pozzolanic properties of these materials facilitate soil stabilization, making them desirable as fill additives. Coal ash has been used as fill in asphalt, road bases, parking lots, housing developments, embankments, and to line on-site disposal facilities at the utilities. In the future, numerous other construction applications may use coal ash as fill, particularly if the ash is available at lower cost than standard fill materials. However, the use of ash as fill is limited somewhat because of the variability of the ash composition.

Bottom ash and boiler slag have been used as substitutes for sand in sand-blasting operations and road de-icing. Ash and slag particles are similar in size and density to sand particles. In areas where sand is costly to transport, these wastes can be economical substitutes. Ash is less corrosive than salt and could therefore be a preferable de-icing material, although in some municipalities the use of ash for de-icing has been prohibited due to public concern over aesthetics (e.g., ash residue on cars).

A variety of minor uses for fly ash and bottom ash have been considered, some of which have already been implemented at a small number of utilities. For example, bottom ash has been used for granular roofing material. Fly ash has been used by some facilities as a stabilization reagent for acidic



aqueous or semi-solid hazardous wastes: the high-pH fly ash reacts with other, low-pH waste to generate a neutral solution and to simultaneously precipitate dissolved metals as oxides and hydroxides. Because the fly ash exhibits pozzolanic properties, the ultimate waste product, when dried, often resembles concrete. The metals from the original waste stream are usually so strongly bound within the chemical structure of the final waste product that they will not leach out, even under acidic conditions.

Because fly ash has some of the same physical characteristics as a silty clay, fly ash may be used as an additive to clay liners for waste management facilities, particularly for impoundments. Fly ash is cohesive and fairly impermeable when properly compacted, and mixes well with some of the clays used in impoundment liners. However, because chemical composition of fly ash is variable, its utilization as liner material may be limited. If methods are improved to be sure that minimum permeability and shear strength requirements could be maintained over time, then the use of fly ash as an impoundment liner material may increase.

Fly ash has been used occasionally as a soil conditioner to increase the pH of acidic soils, thereby enhancing crop growth. Fly ash can also contribute minerals to the soil. However, soil conditioners in common use today, mostly agricultural limestones, are so inexpensive and easy to obtain that it would be difficult to penetrate this market with a fly ash product.

There are few processes currently available for recovery of materials from coal ash. One facility has had some commercial success at producing



magnetite from fly ash.<sup>37</sup> Magnetite recovered from fly ash actually contains a higher percentage of magnetics than does natural magnetite, making it a more efficient coal cleaning agent. This particular technology shows some promise of expanding; other processes, mostly for metals recovery, are in the development stage. Recovery processes for alumina and titanium are at an advanced stage of development. However, while both these technologies have been proven feasible, neither is currently economically competitive with ore-processing technologies. Another potential metal recovery process, dubbed the DAL process and still in the research stage, involves a series of relatively simple operations that can be performed with commercially available process equipment to recover various metals from fly ash. Theoretically, this process could show a substantial return on investment soon after the recovery facility began operating.<sup>38</sup>

There is little information available to the Agency on the environmental effects of utilization of coal combustion wastes. For many applications, such as the use of coal ash in cement and concrete products, it would appear that any adverse environmental impacts would be minimal. To the extent that coal combustion wastes can be recycled in an environmentally acceptable manner, utilization would help to reduce the amount of waste disposed. The Agency is very interested in reducing the amount of waste that needs to be disposed by the utility industry; however, barring major breakthroughs in recycling techniques, it appears the potential for significantly increasing the amount of waste utilization may be limited.<sup>39</sup> Given current utilization techniques, the Agency expects that the major portion of coal combustion wastes will continue to be land disposed.

### FGD Wastes

The prospects for utilization of FGD sludge are less promising than those for ash utilization. FGD sludge is not structurally stable or strong enough to serve as a construction material, nor does it show the pozzolanic properties required for a cement substitute. Current research in the field of FGD sludge utilization is focusing on a dry scrubber method in which reagents will be used to precipitate the FGD waste streams as dry gypsum powder. Gypsum is sold for use in wallboard; however, there is currently a glut on the market, and in any case, other sources of gypsum may be preferred because the gypsum produced from FGD is often of lesser quality. Some researchers are making an effort to find a reagent that will precipitate a dry powder which, when mixed with water, will exhibit pozzolanic properties and will harden to a concrete-like material. No testing has been done, however, as the research is still in the conceptual stage.

Although by-product utilization of FGD sludges comprises less than one percent of total sludge production, a much greater percentage of FGD by-products may be recoverable in the very near future since two full-scale recovery processes and one test-scale recovery process for FGD by-products are currently under development. Of the two full-scale processes, the Wellman-Lord process recovers both sulfuric acid and elemental sulfur from the waste stream, while the magnesium oxide scrubber process recovers only sulfuric acid.<sup>40</sup> The citrate scrubbing process, currently in the testing phase, recovers elemental sulfur. FGD recovery processes currently in the

research stage will be used to recover elemental sulfur, sulfuric acid, and gypsum from the FGD process, and should be available for full-scale use within the next decade.<sup>41</sup> All recovery processes for FGD wastes generate both a by-product stream and a waste stream that must be disposed.

### **Low-Volume Utility Wastes**

EPA currently assumes that most low-volume utility wastes are co-disposed with the high-volume wastes or, in some instances, burned in the boiler at the power plant, although little data exist that accurately describe industry-wide practices on low-volume waste disposal.<sup>42</sup> Since co-disposal is a common industry practice, low-volume wastes do not have specific processes associated with their recovery or utilization. Although this practice of co-disposal (or burning) may continue into the future, certain waste streams, such as spent cleaning solvents, might be recovered by distilling and collecting the solvents at high temperature, which would leave a low-volume residue to be disposed. The recovered solvent could then be reused on-site as a cleaning solvent or sold to another facility. If an organic solvent were contaminated in such a way that contaminant removal were difficult or impossible, the contaminated solvent could be burned. For low-volume waste streams burned in the boiler, these wastes could be transported to an off-site facility that would burn them as fuel. If low-volume wastes were considered hazardous, regulations might restrict the burning of these wastes, potentially making this option infeasible.<sup>43</sup>

Other recovery schemes for individual low-volume waste streams may be developed if these streams are segregated from the high-volume wastes. At this time, however, few recovery processes and utilization techniques have been considered separately for low-volume utility wastes.

### **Recycled Effluent**

Approximately 25 percent of the utilities that utilize surface impoundments recycle some of their pond effluent back to the plant.<sup>44</sup> If the recycled effluent is used as sluice water, the system pH may increase to values well above 10. The recycled effluent may also be used as cooling water prior to ultimate discharge. Although effluent recycling is not a waste recovery or utilization technique, it can affect the chemical characteristics of the solid wastes that may come into contact with the recycled water.

### **4.3 SUMMARY**

Coal combustion waste management practices by electric utilities vary widely across the industry. State regulation, regional factors such as land availability and water availability, and age of the power plant all have an effect on the type of waste management practices that are employed. Alternative practices, such as ground-water monitoring and leachate collection, are used by some utilities, and in some states are mandated by regulation. A significant portion of coal combustion by-products are recovered and utilized for various purposes.