

# MWVG

Midwest Generation, LLC

## Joliet 29 Generating Station

# 2022 Safety Factor Assessment for Ash Pond 2



**Revision 0**

**October 14, 2022**

**Issue Purpose: Use**

**Project No.: A12661.150**

55 East Monroe Street  
Chicago, IL 60603-5780 USA  
312-269-2000  
[www.sargentlundy.com](http://www.sargentlundy.com)



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## 1.0 PURPOSE & SCOPE

### 1.1 PURPOSE

Ash Pond 2 at Midwest Generation, LLC's (MWG) Joliet 29 Station ("Joliet 29" or the "Station") is an existing coal combustion residual (CCR) surface impoundment that is regulated by the Illinois Pollution Control Board's "Standards for the Disposal of Coal Combustion Residuals in CCR Surface Impoundments." These regulations are codified in Part 845 to Title 35 of the Illinois Administrative Code (35 Ill. Adm. Code 845, Ref. 1) and are also referred to herein as the "Illinois CCR Rule." Pursuant to 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a), MWG must conduct and complete a safety factor assessment that documents whether the critical cross section at Ash Pond 2 achieves the minimum safety factors specified in 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a).

This report documents the 2022 safety factor assessment conducted and completed in accordance with the Illinois and Federal CCR Rules by Sargent & Lundy (S&L) on behalf of MWG for Ash Pond 2 at Joliet 29.

This report:

- Lists the inputs and assumptions used in the 2022 safety factor assessment,
- Discusses the methodology used to conduct the 2022 safety factor assessment,
- Lists and compares the safety factor acceptance criteria for CCR surface impoundments promulgated by the Illinois CCR Rule and by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulations for CCR surface impoundments,
- Summarizes the results from the initial federal safety factor assessment completed for Ash Pond 2 that was conducted in accordance with the aforementioned U.S. EPA regulations,
- Evaluates potential changes to the inputs used in the initial federal safety factor assessment to determine whether new or updated liquefaction and/or structural stability analyses are warranted, and
- Provides the 2022 factors of safety for Ash Pond 2 in accordance with 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a).

### 1.2 SCOPE

In addition to being regulated under the Illinois CCR Rule, Ash Pond 2 at Joliet 29 is also regulated by the U.S. EPA's "Standards for the Disposal of Coal Combustion Residuals in Landfills and Surface Impoundments," 40 CFR Part 257 Subpart D (Ref. 2), also referred to herein as the "Federal CCR Rule." Per the 2016 Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act, Ash Pond 2 will continue to be subject to both the Illinois and Federal CCR Rules until the U.S. EPA approves the Illinois EPA's CCR permit program; the Illinois EPA has yet to publish a timeline for submitting its proposed CCR permit program to the U.S. EPA for approval. However, the scope of this 2022 safety factor assessment is strictly limited to demonstrating compliance with the Illinois CCR Rule. Pursuant to 20 CFR 257.73(f)(3), the next safety factor

assessment for demonstrating compliance with the Federal CCR Rule will be completed in 2026, five years after the last federal assessment was completed (2021).

## 2.0 INPUTS

### **Safety Factor Acceptance Criteria for CCR Surface Impoundments**

The Illinois CCR Rule (Ref. 1, § 845.460) requires all existing CCR surface impoundments to achieve four minimum safety factors at the impoundment’s critical cross section, which is defined by the Illinois CCR Rule as “the cross section anticipated to be the most susceptible of all cross-sections to structural failure based on appropriate engineering considerations, including loading conditions.” The Federal CCR Rule (Ref. 2, § 257.73(e)) has the same safety factor acceptance criteria as the Illinois CCR Rule. Table 2-1 presents the safety factor acceptance criteria promulgated by both sets of regulations for existing CCR surface impoundments.

**Table 2-1 – Safety Factor Acceptance Criteria for Existing CCR Surface Impoundments**

<b>Loading Condition</b>	<b>Minimum Allowable Factor of Safety</b>	<b>Illinois CCR Rule Reference</b>	<b>Federal CCR Rule Reference</b>
Long-Term, Maximum Storage Pool	1.50	§ 845.460(a)(2)	§ 257.73(e)(1)(i)
Maximum Surcharge Pool	1.40	§ 845.460(a)(3)	§ 257.73(e)(1)(ii)
Seismic	1.00	§ 845.460(a)(4)	§ 257.73(e)(1)(iii)
Liquefaction	1.20	§ 845.460(a)(5)	§ 257.73(e)(1)(iv)

### **Initial Federal Safety Factor Assessment**

Appendix A provides the initial federal safety factor assessment conducted by Geosyntec Consultants in 2016 for Ash Pond 2 (Ref. 3).

### **Site Topography & Aerial Images**

Topographic data for Ash Pond 2 and the adjacent areas was obtained from an aerial survey flown at the site in June 2008 (Ref. 4). Historical and recent aerial images of Ash Pond 2 and adjacent areas were obtained from Google Earth Pro (Ref. 5).

### **Groundwater**

Static water elevation data for groundwater at the site was obtained from annual groundwater monitoring reports prepared by KPRG and Associates, Inc. for the CCR surface impoundment in accordance with 40 CFR 257.90(e) (Refs. 12 through 16) and 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.610(e)(1) (Ref. 17).

### **Ash Pond Conditions**

The operating and physical conditions for Ash Pond 2 were based on visual observations made by S&L during a site visit on September 23, 2022, discussions with MWG personnel, and the annual inspection reports prepared for the pond in accordance with 40 CFR 257.83(b) (Refs. 6 through 11).

### **Horizontal Seismic Coefficient**

Pursuant to 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a)(4), Ash Pond 2 must have a minimum factor of safety of 1.00 when analyzed under a seismic loading condition. This loading condition is represented by a horizontal seismic coefficient that is based on a peak ground acceleration (PGA) with a 2 percent probability of exceedance in 50 years in accordance with the definition of “[m]aximum horizontal acceleration in lithified earth material” promulgated by 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.120. The design horizontal seismic coefficient is also based on the mapped spectral response acceleration at a period of 1 second adjusted for site-specific soil conditions ( $S_{M1}$ ). Table 2-2 presents the seismic response parameters obtained from ASCE 7-22 (Ref. 18) on which Ash Pond 2’s seismic loading condition was based.

**Table 2-2 – Horizontal Seismic Coefficient Inputs**

Parameter	Symbol	Value
Peak Ground Acceleration	PGA	0.094
Mapped Spectral Response, 1-Second Period, Adjusted for Site Effects	$S_{M1}$	0.16

## **3.0 ASSUMPTIONS**

There are no assumptions in this document that require verification.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

As documented in last year’s safety factor assessment, the 2021 factors of safety for Ash Pond 2 were based on the initial factors of safety calculated for the pond pursuant to the Federal CCR Rule after it was determined that the bases for the initial federal safety factor assessment were still valid. Accordingly, the bases for Ash Pond 2’s initial factors of safety as documented within the pond’s federal safety factor were re-evaluated to determine if any changes have occurred since the initial federal assessment was completed.

Identified changes were then evaluated to determine if updates to the pond's previous structural stability and/or liquefaction analyses were warranted. Where no changes were noted for a given input, or where identified changes were determined to have no impact on the results and conclusions of the initial federal safety factor assessment, the previous evaluation of that input was considered to still be valid for this 2022 assessment.

## **5.0 ASSESSMENT**

### **5.1 SUMMARY OF 2021 SAFETY FACTOR ASSESSMENT**

The previous safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2 was completed on October 15, 2021. Ultimately, the 2021 factors of safety for Ash Pond 2 were based on the factors of safety calculated in the initial federal safety factor assessment after it was determined that the bases for the initial federal safety factor assessment were still valid. The initial federal safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2 ultimately concluded the pond's critical cross-sections are stable and meet the safety factor requirements presented in 40 CFR 257.73(e)(1)(i) through 257.73(e)(1)(iv). Because the Illinois and Federal CCR Rules have the same safety factor acceptance criteria, the 2021 safety factor assessment ultimately concluded that the factors of safety calculated for the pond in the initial federal safety factor assessment are in conformance with the safety factor criteria promulgated under 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a)(2) through 845.460(a)(5).

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF INITIAL FEDERAL SAFETY FACTOR ASSESSMENT**

The initial federal safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2 was completed in October 2016 and is included in its entirety in Appendix A. As previously stated, the results of this assessment indicated that the pond's critical cross-sections are stable and meet the factor of safety requirements presented in 40 CFR 257.73(e)(1)(i) through 257.73(e)(1)(iv).

In addition to evaluating the pond's earthen dikes, the initial federal safety factor assessment also evaluated a reinforced concrete cantilever retaining wall located along the southwest portion of Ash Pond 2's southern dike. This wall section was analyzed to confirm it meets or exceeds the minimum factors of safety for bearing capacity, overturning, and sliding that are generally accepted industry standards.

### **5.3 CHANGES IN BASES FOR INITIAL FEDERAL SAFETY FACTORS**

The following subsections summarize the evaluation conducted to determine if (1) changes to the design inputs used in Ash Pond 2's initial federal safety factor assessment have occurred since the assessment was completed in 2016, and (2) whether the 2016 structural stability and liquefaction analyses can be accepted as-is for this 2022 assessment or if further analysis is required.

### **5.3.1 CHANGES IN GEOTECHNICAL DATA**

Based on reviews of the annual inspection reports (Refs. 6 through 11) and Google Earth aerial images (Ref. 5), there have been no significant changes to the embankments or underlying soils that would require updating the geotechnical parameters used in the 2016 analysis (Ref. 3).

### **5.3.2 CHANGES IN TOPOGRAPHY ADJACENT TO ASH POND 2**

Based on reviews of the annual inspection reports (Refs. 6 through 11) and Google Earth aerial images (Ref. 5), there have been no significant modifications to the ground surfaces adjacent to Ash Pond 2 (mass excavations, mass fill placement, *etc.*) since the initial federal safety factor assessment was completed. Therefore, the topographic data collected for the site in 2008 (Ref. 4) remains valid for use in this 2022 assessment.

### **5.3.3 CHANGES IN GROUNDWATER TABLE**

Based on reviews of the annual groundwater monitoring and corrective action reports for Ash Pond 2 (Refs. 12 through 17), no significant variations in the groundwater were noted. Because Ash Pond 2 is lined with a geomembrane, the embankments are not hydraulically connected to the water levels within the pond, and a typical phreatic surface normally associated with seepage through an earthen embankment is not applicable. The reported static groundwater elevation is valid for this analysis, and there have been no significant changes in the surface water conditions near the site that would impact the site's groundwater levels.

### **5.3.4 CHANGES IN EMBANKMENT GEOMETRY**

Based on reviews of the annual inspection reports (Refs. 6 through 11), Google Earth aerial images (Ref. 5), and visual observations made by S&L in September 2022, there have been no significant modifications to the pond's embankments since the initial federal safety factor assessment was completed. Therefore, there is no basis to re-evaluate Ash Pond 2's embankment geometry for this 2022 assessment.

### **5.3.5 CHANGES IN EARTHQUAKE DESIGN BASIS**

The design horizontal seismic coefficient utilized in the existing technical analysis (Ref. 3) was based on published data in ASCE 7-10 (Ref. 19). Since the existing technical analysis was developed, an updated publication of the reference material has been produced (ASCE 7-22 (Ref. 18)), which provides updated values for the parameters used to determine the design horizontal seismic coefficient (see Tables 2-2 and 5-1). Based on the reduction in the site seismic loading parameters from ASCE 7-10 to ASCE 7-16, the horizontal seismic coefficient for Ash Pond 2's seismic loading condition will be less than the value used in the initial federal safety factor assessment. Therefore, the horizontal seismic coefficient used for the 2016

analysis is conservative. Thus, it is not necessary to change the earthquake design basis used to conduct the initial safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2.

**Table 5-1 – Seismic Loading Parameters Comparison**

Parameter	Symbol	2016 Values per ASCE 7-10	2022 Values per ASCE 7-22
Peak Ground Acceleration	PGA	0.132	0.094
Mapped Spectral Response, 1-Second Period, Adjusted for Site Class Effects	$S_M$	0.17	0.16

### 5.3.6 CHANGES IN ASH POND OPERATIONS

Ash Pond 2 was originally designed to manage CCR and miscellaneous non-CCR wastestreams from the Station. Following the conversion of Joliet 29's coal-fired units to natural gas, the pond was no longer used to manage CCR wastestreams and was eventually taken out of service. In accordance with the Station's ash pond maintenance practices, the Station then began dewatering and removing CCR from the pond. As documented in the pond's annual inspection reports since 2019 (Refs. 9 through 11), minimal CCR remains in Ash Pond 2. During S&L's site visit in September 2022, no CCR and only a few feet of stormwater were visually observed in Ash Pond 2. In April 2021, MWG filed a notice of intent to close Ash Pond 2 in accordance with the Federal CCR Rule's closure criteria (Ref. 2, § 257.102). Closure construction activities will commence upon receipt of a closure construction permit from the Illinois EPA in accordance with Subpart B of the Illinois CCR Rule.

The decrease in surface water elevation in Ash Pond 2 compared to the design operating water level decreases the driving forces in the embankment; therefore, the surface water elevation used for the 2016 analysis is conservative for the pond's current operating condition. Therefore, there is no basis to re-evaluate the surface water elevations used to conduct the initial federal safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2.

## 5.4 2022 SAFETY FACTOR ASSESSMENT

Per the preceding subsections, there have been no significant operational changes to Ash Pond 2, the pond's embankments, the underlying soils, the adjacent topography, or groundwater levels. While the seismic design criteria for Ash Pond 2 has changed, the horizontal seismic coefficient calculated using the updated seismic design parameters will be less than the value used in the initial federal safety factor assessment, thereby making the 2016 analysis conservative under present design criteria. Therefore, the initial federal safety factor assessment completed in 2016 for Ash Pond 2 remains valid.



Based on the preceding observations, the initial factors of safety calculated for Ash Pond 2 in 2016 pursuant to the Federal CCR Rule and the bases for these safety factors remain valid for this 2022 assessment. As previously discussed, because the Illinois and Federal CCR Rules have the same safety factor acceptance criteria, these factors of safety for Ash Pond 2 are in conformance with the safety factor criteria promulgated under 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a)(2) through 845.460(a)(5).

## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

This assessment re-evaluated the factors and design inputs used as the bases for the initial federal safety factor assessment completed in 2016 in accordance with the Federal CCR Rule for Joliet 29's Ash Pond 2 (Ref. 3). It was determined that no significant changes have occurred within the last six years that would invalidate the conclusions of the initial federal safety factor assessment. Therefore, the factors of safety reported in the initial federal safety factor assessment for Ash Pond 2's earthen dikes and retaining wall remain valid for this 2022 assessment. Moreover, because the Illinois and Federal CCR Rules have the same safety factor acceptance criteria, these federal factors of safety for Ash Pond 2 are in conformance with the safety factor criteria promulgated under 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a)(2) through 845.460(a)(5).

Table 6-1 presents the 2022 factors of safety for Ash Pond 2's earthen dikes as determined in accordance with 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460(a).

**Table 6-1 – 2021 Illinois CCR Rule Factors of Safety for Ash Pond 2 at the Joliet 29 Station**

Loading Condition	Ash Pond 2	Min. Allowable Factor of Safety
Long-Term, Maximum Storage Pool	≥ 1.50	<b>1.50</b>
Maximum Surcharge Pool	≥ 1.40	<b>1.40</b>
Seismic	≥ 1.00	<b>1.00</b>
Liquefaction	Note 1	<b>1.20</b>

Notes: 1) The embankment soils for Ash Pond 2 are not considered susceptible to liquefaction because saturation of the embankment soils is unlikely based on the installed geomembrane liner system and depth to groundwater. Thus, liquefaction safety factors are not reported.

## 7.0 CERTIFICATION

I certify that:

- This safety factor assessment was prepared by me or under my direct supervision.
- The work was conducted in accordance with the requirements of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.460.
- I am a registered professional engineer under the laws of the State of Illinois.

Certified By: Thomas J. Dehlin

Date: October 14, 2022

Seal:



## 8.0 REFERENCES

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**APPENDIX A: 2016 FEDERAL SAFETY FACTOR  
ASSESSMENT FOR ASH POND 2**

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