Power Sector Combustion Byproducts: U.S. Energy Information Administration Report Notes Beneficial Use Exceeded Material Disposal in 2020



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A May 26th United States Energy Information Administration ("EIA") report has been issued titled:

Beneficial Use of Power Sector Combustion Byproducts Exceeded Material Disposed in 2020 ("Report")

The EIA *Report* notes that in 2020, for the first time (since 2008) greater amounts of power sector byproducts were beneficially used rather than being disposed of.

Coal-fired facilities produce combustion byproducts which include fly ash and bottom ash. Fly ash is the lighter ash that arises in the boilers' flue gases. Bottom ash is the heavier ash that collects at the bottom of the boilers.

Each ton of coal consumed in the electric power sector is stated to have in 2020 produced about 0.17 tons of combustion byproducts.

Combustion byproducts are typically addressed in the following ways:

- Disposal
- Utilized by the utility
- Sold to other businesses for beneficial use
- Stored for later use or sale

The EIA *Report* states that between 2015 and 2020 the total production of combustion byproducts fell by 36%. This is stated to be a decrease of 119 million tons to 76 million tons. The decrease is explained by a 41% reduction in coal consumption in the electric power sector during this period.

Of equal note, the disposal of such byproducts has decreased. This has meant a shift to beneficial uses which includes:

- Use in manufacturing products such as concrete and wallboard
- Application in structure fills
- Utilization to produce gypsum wallboard

The EIA *Report* states that revenue from the sale of combustion byproducts for beneficial use:

. . . partially offsets generators' operation and maintenance costs.

Total revenues in 2020 were stated to be $382 million, which included $225 million from the sale of fly ash (or fly ash intermingled with bottom ash).

A copy of the EIA *Report* can be downloaded here.