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### **First-ever Shareholder Vote on Coal Ash Risks**

#### *MDU Shareholders Demand Transparency on Coal Ash Practices and Mitigation Measures*

BISMARCK, ND – In the first-ever shareholder vote on coal ash practices and disclosure, 25.6% of MDU Resources shareholders voted in support of increased transparency on this key environmental issue.

“A 25.6% vote is a dramatic show of investor support for the first vote on this issue,” remarked Amy Galland, Ph.D., Research Director for [As You Sow](#), which filed the resolution. “Usually new environmental resolutions get between 5-7%, this vote was 5 times that. It indicates just how seriously shareholders view the financial risks from a utility’s coal ash storage practices.”

Coal ash is a byproduct of burning coal that contains arsenic, mercury, lead, and other toxins. The ash is stored in enormous ponds, landfills or mines and, according to the EPA, has contaminated groundwater in 24 states.

In 2008, a dam burst at a coal ash pond operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that covered local communities in toxic sludge. TVA has estimated spill-related costs at \$1.2 billion. “The TVA spill and its associated high costs heightened investor concern about how utilities are managing coal ash,” notes Galland.

The resolution that was supported by over 42 million votes asked the company to report on the company’s efforts to reduce environmental and health hazards associated with coal combustion waste ponds, impoundments, and mines, and how those efforts reduce risks to the company’s finance and operations. Galland states: “Today’s vote is important – it signals not only that our company needs to be transparent about its practices, but also that the company needs to move to safer, more secure storage methods to avoid a TVA-like disaster and protect the health of people in its community.”

MDU is the first of three votes on coal ash this proxy season. Emily Stone, Shareholder Advocate at [Green Century Capital Management](#) and filer of a resolution at Southern Company on coal ash states: “The strong show of investor support for better coal ash practices and transparency at MDU should send a clear signal to shareholders of CMS and Southern that this is an important issue for our companies to address. We urge CMS and Southern shareholders to vote “FOR” in support of the resolutions on coal ash.”

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**As You Sow** is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting corporate accountability, social justice and environmental protection. Its Corporate Social Responsibility Program is one of the nation’s leading proponents of shareholder advocacy and provides shareholder dialogue, resolution and solicitation management services to the non-profit socially responsible investment and foundation communities.