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America's coal plants left behind 1.87 billion tonnes of ash: Researchers say it could yield \$8.4 billion in rare-Earth elements

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US coal ash holds significant rare earth mineral reserves....

Coal ash has long been viewed as industrial waste. Accumulated in landfills, ponds and disposal sites across the US, this by-product of coal-fired power

generation is considered one of the largest waste streams from the industry. But the waste could also be a valuable source of rare earth minerals used in electric vehicles, wind turbines, smartphones and defence equipment.

A recent study in the International Journal of Coal Science & Technology, available through [Springer Nature](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40789-024-00710-z) (<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40789-024-00710-z>), estimates that accessible US coal ash contains about 11 million tons of rare earth elements worth \$8.4 billion. It could help the

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