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## Oakland Officials Vote to Ban Coal Handling and Storage at New Shipping Terminal

Environmentalists have defeated similar proposals in Oregon and Washington



The former Oakland Army Base pier and the Port of Oakland in Oakland, Calif. Officials in Northern California have voted against a plan to build a marine terminal that would serve as a gateway for Utah-mined coal heading to Asia. Photo: Associated Press

By Alejandro Lazo

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SAN FRANCISCO—City officials in Oakland, Calif. late Monday moved to block a proposal that would have made the city a gateway for Utah coal to be shipped overseas, after the issue [became a political flashpoint](#) between environmentalists and a longtime political ally to Gov. Jerry Brown.

The Oakland City Council voted to ban the handling and storage of coal and coke at the city's terminals and bulk material facilities. The unanimous vote came after a long, packed city council meeting; advocates and opponents of the ban demonstrated outside. A second, largely procedural, vote is expected in July.

The ban aims to derail a proposed deal that would have granted four coal-producing counties in Utah rail access to a major commodities shipping terminal under development on city land, adjacent to the Port of Oakland.

The new terminal is part of a major redevelopment of an old Army Base the city hopes will bring thousands of jobs to a city that still has pockets of poverty and violence, even as the region's tech sector booms and housing costs rise. Utah had agreed to invest \$53 million in the project for the right to export its goods.

California ports in Stockton, Richmond and Long Beach export coal, but because of climate change and pollution concerns, such terminals have become highly contested on the West Coast. Environmentalists have defeated similar proposals in Oregon and Washington.

The battle ignited in Oakland after the plan to allow coal to be shipped through the terminal was made public, roiling local politics in the city of about 414,000. Among those opposed to the plan was Mayor Libby Schaaf, a former aide to Mr. Brown when he was mayor of the city from 1999 to 2007.

Environmentalists and some community groups opposed allowing coal to be shipped through the city. The Sierra Club, which led opposition to the plan, argued coal dust has been linked to decreased lung capacity, childhood bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, emphysema and heart disease.

Brittany King, conservation coordinator for the San Francisco Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club, said Monday that the ban would "protect Oakland from dirty, dangerous coal exports," and respected "the will of the people."

Mark McClure, vice president of the California Capital and Investment Group, which is financing the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal, said late Monday the company "will continue to honor all of our commitments to the City of Oakland and our partners to deliver on the promise of the Oakland Global development."

But the company's chief executive, Phil Tagami, said last year that restricting commodities at the terminal could harm the project's success.

Mr. Tagami is a local businessman with close ties to Mr. Brown, who has been outspoken on combating climate change.

Mr. Brown is an investor with Mr. Tagami in an Oakland office building, according to an economic disclosure form filed by the governor.

During Mr. Brown's gubernatorial administration, Mr. Tagami served as chairman of the state's Lottery Commission and as a member of its Medical Board; he left the administration in 2013.

A spokesman for Mr. Brown said Monday before the vote that the governor declined to comment on the Oakland terminal, or the proposed ban.

The terminal, which would sit at the end of an existing track network, would be managed by Terminal Logistics Solutions, a company that is looking to partner with the Utah counties to export commodities including coal.

The project, dubbed Oakland Global, is expected to bring inasmuch as \$2.9 million in annual property taxes for the city, schools and other local governments, and has already created more than 2,300 jobs, Mr. Tagami has said.

Utah has sought new markets for its coal as energy companies and utilities in the U.S. have moved toward natural-gas plants and renewable forms of energy due to stricter federal pollution rules. While coal mining represents a fraction of Utah's economy, it has long been a source of jobs for counties in the central and southeastern part of the state.

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