RESOLUTION NO. 2026-77

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALBANY CITY COUNCIL OPPOSING FACILITIES THAT ENGAGE IN HANDLING AND STORAGE OF COAL AND PETCOKE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION AND URGING STRINGENT REGULATION OF SUCH FACILITIES BY THE BAY AREA AIR DISTRICT

WHEREAS, on June 4, 2026, President Donald J. Trump announced a $75 million Defense Production Act grant to aid private developers in construction of the Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal (OBOT), a "massive" rail-to-ship coal export facility in West Oakland that Trump declared could start shipping coal as soon as 2028; and

WHEREAS, proponents have proposed the approval of the OBOT facility at a location on the former Oakland Army Base. The proponents have indicated that the terminal will receive shipments of coal on rail lines, store the coal, and then transfer the coal onto ships for transport; and

WHEREAS, coal would be transported to the terminal along a Class 1 rail line serving the port and the most direct and most likely route is the Union Pacific rail line running through Albany; and

WHEREAS, on March 2, 2015, the Albany City Council adopted Resolution No. 2015-10, opposing the shipment of coal through the East Bay and through the City of Albany; and

WHEREAS, Albany, along with the communities of the Bay Area, have been historically united in opposition to the transport of coal through the East Bay and the storage and handling of coal in West Oakland and, in 2016, expressed their opposition in a letter from the mayors of Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, Emeryville, Dublin, Fremont, Hayward,

Livermore, Richmond, San Leandro, and Union City and in resolutions passed by the city councils of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, El Cerrito, Oakland, and Richmond;[1] and

WHEREAS, OBOT would operate for decades under a 66-year lease with the City of Oakland, so decisions made now will have local, regional, and global impacts for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Energy states that the initial capacity of the proposed terminal will be 9 to 10 million tons of coal per year,[2] which translates to rail traffic of multiple mile-long "unit" trains passing daily in each direction through many East Bay communities, including Albany as well as Martinez, Crockett, Rodeo, Pinole, San Pablo, North Richmond, Richmond, El Cerrito, Berkeley, Emeryville, and Oakland; and

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[1] See Zoe Chafe Ph.D., Analysis of Health Impacts and Safety Risks and Other Issues/Concerns Related to the Transport, Handling, Transloading, and Storage of Coal and/or Petroleum Coke (Petcoke) in Oakland and at the Proposed Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal, June 22, 2016, p. 100 et seq. [collecting letter and resolutions] (https://nocoalinoakland.info/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Zoe-Chafe-Analysis-of-health-Impacts-and-Safety-Risks-etc-oak059408-6-22-2016.pdf); Oakland City Council Ordinance No. 13385 and Resolution No. 86234 (June 27, 2016); Albany City Council Resolution 2015-10 (March 2, 2015).

[2] U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Department to Use Defense Production Act Funding to Expand Coal Capacity at 13 Plants and Build Export Infrastructure (June 4, 2026) (https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-use-defense-production-act-funding-expand-coal-capacity-13-plants-and); U.S. Department of Energy, Defense Production Act Title III Project Selections: Coal Fleet Projectsvand West Gateway Terminal (undated) (https://www.energy.gov/hgeo/defense-production-act-title-iii-project-selections-coal-fleet-projects-and-west-gateway).

WHEREAS, coal trains traveling through Albany to and from the proposed terminal would increase the risk of toxic coal dust escaping into neighborhoods where thousands of people live, work, shop, and recreate each day, passing less than 100 feet from youth sports facilities at Fielding Field, the University Village Community Garden, Verana Hill affordable housing development, and several residences along Cleveland Ave; less than one-third of a mile from University Village family housing, Ocean View Park, the City of Albany after-school program, and Ocean View Elementary School; and less than one-half mile from Belmont Village Senior Living retirement home, and would pose the same danger to other communities along the coal trains' route; and

WHEREAS, emissions of coal dust can occur when products are transported, handled and stored at bulk transfer facilities, and even from empty rail cars.[3] Coal handling and transport has been shown to significantly increase ambient fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and coarse particulate matter (PM10). UC Davis researchers monitoring trains in Richmond found that passing coal trains added an average of 8.3 micrograms per cubic meter of PM2.5 to local air,[4] the equivalent of a 33 point increase in the Air Quality Index (AQI); and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency concluded that "[s]ignificant quantities of fugitive dust from pet coke storage and handling operations present a health risk."

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[3] See Zoe Chafe Ph.D., Analysis of Health Impacts and Safety Risks and Other Issues/Concerns Related to the Transport, Handling, Transloading, and Storage of Coal and/or Petroleum Coke (Petcoke) in Oakland and at the Proposed Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal, June 22, 2016, p. 100 et seq. [collecting letter and resolutions] (https://nocoalinoakland.info/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Zoe-Chafe-Analysis-of-health-Impacts-and-Safety-Risks-etc-oak059408-6-22-2016.pdf); Oakland City Council Ordinance No. 13385 and Resolution No. 86234 (June 27, 2016); Albany City Council Resolution 2015-10 (March 2, 2015).

[4] Ostro, et al., The impact of coal trains on PM2.5 in the San Francisco Bay Area, AIR QUALITY, ATMOSPHERE & HEALTH, March 20, 2023, available https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11869-023-01333-0;

The agency expressed particular concern about particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller (PM10) because those particles generally pass through the throat and nose into the lungs and into the bloodstream;[5] and

WHEREAS, the health effects of PM 2.5 are well-documented. A recent CARB-funded study measured air pollution from passing coal trains and facility operations at an existing East Bay coal terminal, finding significantly increased levels of PM2.5, which can cause or worsen lung and heart conditions and result in premature death, with children, seniors, and people of color being at greatest risk.[6] Their health-impact assessment estimated that the incremental PM2.5 from uncovered coal trains produced 1–6% increases over baseline in mortality, cardiovascular and respiratory hospitalizations, and asthma exacerbations.[7] PM2.5 has also been shown to increase rates of depression [8], dementia, stroke, diabetes, pregnancy complications and abnormal fetal brain development, and to increase emergency department visits and lost days of work and school .[9] Dust from coal and petroleum coke (petcoke) carries

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[5] https://archive.epa.gov/epa/petroleum-coke-chicago/health-effects-petroleum-coke.html

[6] See, e.g. Ostro, et al., 2023 at p. 7, see also, Public Health Advisory Panel on Coal in Oakland, An Assessment of the Health and Safety Implications of Coal Transport through Oakland (2016) 40| 1` https://nocoal.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Public-Health-Advisory-Panel-Assesment-of-Health-and-Safety-6-14-2016.pdf

[7] Bart Ostro, Yuanyuan Fang, Marc Carreras Sospedra, Heather Kuiper, Keita Ebisu, Nicholas Spada, Health impact assessment of PM2.5 from uncovered coal trains in the San Francisco Bay Area: Implications for global exposures, Environmental Research, Volume 252, Part 1,2024,118787,ISSN 0013-9351, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2024.118787.

[8] Deng Y, Hao H, Zhu Q, Liu Y, Steenland K. Exposure to Multiple Fine Particulate Matter Components and Incident Depression in the US Medicare Population. JAMA Netw Open. 2025;8(12):e2551042. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2025.51042

[9] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2012–2022). Supplement to the 2019 integrated science assessment for particulate matter (Report No. EPA/600/R-22/028). Office of Research and Development; US EPA

toxic heavy metals, including arsenic, chromium, and lead, which carry their own serious health risks including cancer, kidney disease,and permanent brain damage in children; and

WHEREAS, dust from coal and petcoke can have significant impacts on fish and wildlife and on water quality in nearby public trust waterbodies such as San Francisco Bay. The transit routes for uncovered coal trains run immediately alongside the San Francisco Bay, its estuary system, and its key tributaries, including Cerrito Creek and Cordonices Creek in Albany, presenting an immediate threat of toxic deposition into navigable waters. Such deposition would directly undermine regional investments in water quality and habitat restoration; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Albany stand in solidarity with the residents of Oakland in their opposition to the handling and storage of coal and petcoke, given the well-documented adverse health effects from these activities; and

WHEREAS, proponents of the proposed OBOT facility have emphasized OBOT's "commitment toward unparalleled environmental responsibility" at the terminal. They have promised that their "preeminent concern regarding the acceptance and handling of all commodities is the mitigation and elimination of fugitive dust such that the ambient air would actually improve" as a result of the project;[10] and

WHEREAS, the Bay Area Air District (the Air District) has indicated that it will consider additional controls on sources of fugitive coal and petcoke dust as part of its commitment to strengthen regulatory controls on fugitive dust; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland, alongside neighboring municipalities such as Richmond, Berkeley, and Albany, has historically voted to oppose the transport and storage of

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https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2026-06/pm_isa_supplement_final_report_2022.PDF

[10] Letter from TLS to Hon. Mayor Libby Schaaf (July 15, 2015).

hazardous fossil fuels, including coal and petcoke, due to the documented public health and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, no agency has yet undertaken a review that examined the environmental impacts associated with the handling and storage of coal and petcoke at the proposed OBOT terminal, and the most recent environmental review was undertaken in 2012, before the OBOT developers acknowledged that coal would be transported through the site; and

WHEREAS, the Air District is a Responsible Agency under CEQA that will rely on existing environmental impact reviews in making a permitting decision with respect to OBOT.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Albany opposes the transport of coal and petcoke through the city and through nearby cities. The City also opposes the handling and storage of coal at the proposed OBOT facility in Oakland; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City urges the Air District to adopt measures that would strengthen regulation of coal and petcoke as components of fugitive dust; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City urges the Air District to ensure that any air permit it issues to the OBOT facility fully protects Oakland and other Bay Area workers and residents from exposure to dangerous coal and petcoke emissions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City urges the Air District, in evaluating any application for an air permit for the OBOT terminal, first perform a comprehensive review of all potentially significant environmental impacts of the projected coal handling described by President Trump, as part of a full, up-to-date Environmental Impact Report under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City strongly supports Assembly Bill 40, signed into law by Governor Newsom on September 30, 2026, which requires such a review under CEQA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council directs the City Manager and City Staff to transmit copies of this Resolution to Oakland Mayor Barbara Lee and the Oakland City Council, the Air District Staff and Board of Directors, the California State Legislature, and the California Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that our community's opposition is officially recorded and recognized in all pending permit evaluations and legal proceedings.

PEGGY McQUAID, MAYOR

City of Albany

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PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ALBANY, the 19th day of October, 2026, by the following votes:

AYES: Council Members Hansen-Romero, Jordan, Miki, and Mayor McQuaid

NOES: None

ABSENT: Council Member López

ABSTAINED: None

RECUSED: None

WITNESS MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF THE CITY OF ALBANY, this 20th day of October, 2026.

Anne Hsu
CITY CLERK