

# Plan To Send Coal Through Oakland Met With Protests

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Oakland Protesters Say No To Coal By Rail Plan 

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OAKLAND (KPIX 5) – Hundreds gathered in Oakland Tuesday evening to protest a [plan to bring millions of tons of coal through the Bay Area](#).

U.S. coal companies are hurting because of competition from cheaper natural gas and because of more expensive clean air regulations. While big coal needs to boost exports to survive, these people don't want it in their backyards.

They're Bay Area residents, angry to discover a hush-hush [plan](#) to bring as many as a dozen 100-car coal trains a week from Utah, through East Bay cities to a destination export terminal on the Oakland waterfront.

The terminal would be built right next to the Bay Bridge toll plaza. It's city owned land being developed by a private company, using mostly public [funds](#).

20th century, we need to move forward, not backward,” said Jess Dervin-Ackerman of the Sierra Club.

Already, major cities like Portland and Seattle have shut down coal projects, leaving U.S. coal hurting and hunting for new export opportunities in places like Oakland.

“We are not using it in the U.S. as much, California doesn’t use coal at all for electricity. So these coal companies are just trying to use us as a throughput to get their commodity to a foreign market,” Dervin-Ackerman said.

The man behind the coal plan is prominent local developer Phil Tagami. “We are not building a coal distribution terminal,” he said.

KPIX 5 asked, “It is going to have coal coming through it, right?”

His response, “That has not been determined.”

But his company, California Capital and [Investment](#) Group or CCIG, still needs to build the new terminal.

Phil needs cash and the coal deal with Utah would bring in \$53 million.

**KPIX 5:** “We have environmentalists saying West Oakland is already exposed to high rates of pollution, West Oakland children have high rates of asthma they don’t want coal to be coming thru what do you say to that?”

**Tagami:** “I say we have a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) document. That is what we have entitled and that is what we are going to build.”

Dervin-Ackerman with the Sierra Club said that’s not enough.

“The EIR (environmental impact report) was finalized 13 years ago and coal is never mentioned as a commodity. So there has been no study of how that would impact the community. Then they did an addendum to the EIR in 2012 and it wasn’t opened up for public process so nobody was able to comment there either,” she said.

In her first interview on the issue, Mayor Libby Schaaf told KPIX 5 she supports a public hearing planned for September.

“As a city we have to sometimes take a moral stand,” Schaaf said. “They are doing business on city land. They are using the city’s asset, and actually an asset that belongs to all the people of California. It’s my preference to work this out amicably. I am really hoping we can find a resolution without having to go into direct conflict.”

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