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Groups Challenge Port of Long Beach's Plan to Export Toxic Coal

Port approves 2 agreements to lock in coal and petcoke exports for the next 15 years

Long Beach, Calif. – Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment, Natural Resources Defense Council, and Earthjustice [filed an appeal](#) today challenging the Port of Long Beach's recent approval of two controversial agreements, which allow the Port to annually export more than 1 million tons of coal and petcoke, a byproduct of oil refining, for the next 15 years.

At a Port of Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners' meeting earlier this month, Long Beach residents and community organizations raised concerns about the community health and environmental impacts of coal dust blowing off the uncovered rail cars in transit from the coal mines in Utah and Colorado to reach the California coast. Others raised deep concerns about the ethical problems with the Port shipping these dirty fuels overseas, where they'll be burned in countries with little to no emissions controls, thereby contributing to exacerbating climate change.

In spite of community members' concerns, the Port approved the two agreements, including one with the Koch brother-led Oxbow Company. In entering into the agreements, the Port violates the California Environmental Quality Act, which requires the port to analyze and disclose the environmental impacts of proposed projects and adopt all feasible measures to mitigate those impacts.

The appeal filed to the Long Beach City Council is to enforce state law requiring an adequate environmental analysis that assesses, among other things, the greenhouse gas emissions from burning the coal and petroleum coke that would be exported under the agreements. The appeal was filed on behalf of the Sierra Club, Communities for a Better Environment and Natural Resources Defense Council.

The following is a statement from **Adrian Martinez, Earthjustice attorney based in Los Angeles:**

"It's deplorable that a port that calls itself the [Green Port](#) has allowed for the movement of coal and highly pollutant petcoke through its harbor year after year, and will now extend and expand those operations without any second thought to the environmental ramifications."

The following is a statement from **Alicia Rivera, Communities for a Better Environment organizer:**

"Regardless of whether or not the Port of Long Beach commissioners have any children in their lives, they will be responsible for the consequences of their unanimous decision to allow further disruption of our climate for future generations"

The following is a statement from **Morgan Wyenn, attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council:**

“Both the U.S. government and the State of California have established clear policy goals to phase out dirty fuels like coal, and it is unacceptable for the Port of Long Beach, in this day and age, to go against these policy directives just so the City can turn a profit. Long Beach should not be in the business of profiting from fuels we know cause climate change.”

The following is a statement from **Jessica Yarnall Loarie, Sierra Club attorney:**

"All across the West Coast, communities are standing up to Big Coal and Big Oil by opposing their fossil fuel export plans. Last week, the Oakland City Council passed a resolution opposing the transportation of dirty, dangerous fossil fuels by rail through their communities. The Port's neighbors in Long Beach are moving towards clean energy, and Los Angeles plans to be coal-free by 2025 -- yet the Port still wants to embrace the past and ship carbon-intensive coal and petcoke in the middle of our clean energy transition. Long Beach should put the health and safety of its communities first: we don't want to burn coal here, and we don't want to ship our dirty fossil fuels somewhere else."

ONLINE VERSION: <http://earthjustice.org/news/press/2014/groups-challenge-port-of-long-beach-s-plan-to-export-toxic-coal>

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