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Some facts to correct the myths promoted by TLS

1. TLS, the company managing the new port being built on the old Army Base, is not an “Oakland-based, African-American owned company.”

According to a report in the March 27, 2016 Salt Lake Tribune, the Utah coal-mining company Bowie Resource Partners helped create TLS and owns a controlling share in the company. Documents discovered by the Sierra Club through a Freedom of Information Act request showed that behind the scenes, Bowie arranged financing and became a “Series A shareholder” when TLS was created in early 2015.

2. TLS is not primarily interested in providing jobs to Oakland, but rather, in finding markets for dirty coal.

Bowie is a coal company that is desperately trying to find markets for their product, as more and more people realize that burning coal is a huge threat to human health and move towards cleaner energy. At a recent promotion event, TLS representatives were passing out a copy of the book, “The Moral Case for Fossil Fuels,” whose premise is the denial of scientific consensus around global warming. The TLS strategy is denying science and manipulating communities.

3. Shipping coal would not provide more jobs than alternative proposals, but rather, would provide fewer jobs.

Coal, being extremely toxic, would need to be handled primarily by automated machinery. Shipping other goods would provide more jobs—one reason the Alameda Labor Council has passed a resolution against the proposal to ship coal. Any jobs created at a coal terminal would be toxic not only to the community but also to workers. The new bulk export terminal could handle a wide range of products – coal is not the only alternative. And jobs at a coal terminal would be short term. Major investors including Bank of America are unloading investments in coal. Countries all over the world – including China, presumably a target market for coal exports -- are moving away from coal. As coal becomes economically unsustainable, Oakland will be left with a toxic, contaminated site and no jobs at all.

4. The coal terminal does not have the support of the community.

While TLS has cultivated a small number of spokespeople from the community, and even offered money directly to churches in exchange for their support, the vast majority of Oakland residents, and of those most directly impacted, strongly oppose the terminal. In a recent survey, 76% of Oakland residents said they oppose the project. Others opposing the export of coal through Oakland include:

* Alameda County Labor Council, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Locals 6, 10, and 34, the California Nurses Association, Service Employees International Union 1021, which represents workers at the Port of Oakland, and a dozen more labor organizations
* Mayors, city council members, county supervisors, and other elected officials from the East Bay and San Francisco
* More than two dozen religious leaders
* The Alameda County Department of Public Health as well as many neighborhood groups and environmental organizations
* Dozens of Oakland business leaders and real estate agents

5. Supporting the African American community means opposing this terminal.

This project would endanger the African American community. The “covered coal cars” that TLS claims it would use are not in operation anywhere and would pose structural problems the company has not addressed. TLS would have absolutely no authority to regulate transport outside the terminal, so communities along the tracks – including West Oakland – would see an increased risk of asthma, cancer, and heart disease from escaping coal dust.

A significant percentage of the air pollution in West Oakland also comes directly from what is burned in Asia: burning the coal exported through this terminal would raise the level of toxic pollution in this already overburdened community.

Finally, burning this coal would add huge amounts of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, created a measurable rise in global temperature and adding to the climate chaos that is producing wildfires, droughts, superstorms and sea-level rise here and abroad.
"No community, rich or poor, should endure the effects of coal. But the environmental inequity of the coal terminal proposal cannot be disregarded," said Rev. Kenneth Chambers, pastor of West Side Missionary Baptist Church in Oakland. "West Oakland already bears a disproportionate burden of pollution, of toxic contamination from diesel exhaust spewing from thruways crisscrossing through the community. Life expectancy of West Oakland residents is far below the life expectancy of residents in the Oakland hills, and West Oakland tenants are twice as likely to visit emergency rooms for asthma as the rest of Alameda County. The West Oakland community cannot afford to have any more pollution dumped on us. We ask the City Council to stand with us over polluters and profits."

"As a resident of West Oakland, a person with respiratory challenges and a faith leader, I am profoundly concerned about the health and environmental impacts of transporting coal through our city," said Archdeacon of the diocese of California, Carolyn Bolton. "I strongly oppose the development of a coal terminal in our already vulnerable and highly impacted community."

"Oakland should not be involved in shipping coal overseas, since this fossil fuel is the major contributor to climate change," said Margaret Rossoff of the Sunflower Alliance. "Coal needs to be left in the ground and replaced with renewable resources."

For more info, contact the No Coal In Oakland Coalition:

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