It is wonderful to see so many of you here today to celebrate our victory. Thanks to all of you, there will be no coal in Oakland—no coal arriving on trains, no coal stored in West Oakland, no coal shipped from our city overseas. This is a great victory!

We won because our cause is just, and we won because we worked very hard.

The campaign to ban coal put enormous effort into reaching our community. Our petition was signed by thousands of people, and not just on line. We canvassed door to door in West Oakland. We leafleted neighborhoods on National Night Out. We tabled at many different community events. We spoke at meetings, movie showings, classes and churches.

We also spread the word through media, including our own website, Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as coverage in newspaper articles, on-line blogs and radio programs.

Over 600 of you signed up to support the ban at the City Council hearing last September 21—a record-setting number. When the Sierra Club polled people in February, almost half had heard about the threat of coal, thanks to our work.

We won the support of the Alameda Central Labor Council, through the leadership of organizers from SEIU 1021 and the California Nurses Association. This endorsement refutes the tired dichotomy of jobs versus the environment that is so often used against environmental progress.

Many clergy spoke up against coal. They want jobs for their congregants, but not at the expense of healthy lives.

Our campaign reached out to health professionals, to young people, to business people and to elected officials in nearby communities. And of course we got support from allies in other environmental justice organizations.

Thank you to each of you for your participation in this organizing effort.

All of this support created the political pressure that enabled the City Council to do the right thing in the face of lies and threats by the developers. We are thrilled by their unanimous endorsement of the ban on coal.

This outcome would not have happened without amassing the substantial evidence called for in the development agreement. We are grateful for all the public health and environmental scientists who testified at hearings, provided written documentation and
reviewed the record—resulting in three massive summaries of evidence. We believe this work means the ban will prevail if there is a lawsuit.

The ban on coal in Oakland is more than a local victory. It can be an inspiration to activists everywhere fighting the fossil fuel industry. We know that the extractive energy industry is dying, but it’s not giving up without a fight. Working together, all of us have shown that the people can win that fight. Let’s give ourselves a round of applause.