CCIG partner Mark McClure’s Open Forum in defense of shipping coal through the Oakland Bulk Export Terminal is filled with inaccuracies and innuendos.

Coal is shipped through Richmond, but it’s a small fraction of the amount proposed for the Oakland terminal. Rail cars carrying coal come through Oakland, but very rarely, only when the Richmond terminal runs out of space or a dispatcher makes an error. The environmental lawsuit was withdrawn because of timing, not validity. The City Council did not withdraw a related agenda item in February because the concerns about coal transport won’t “stand up to legal or scientific scrutiny,” but to consider less expensive alternatives. Rather than “soundbites,” concerns about coal comprise hundreds of pages of scientific evidence.

This is not “a choice between jobs or health.” There are many bulk products that could provide jobs, in some cases even more than coal. This is not a “taking of vested rights” but the exercise of a contractual clause embodying the city’s right to protect the health and safety of its residents.

We need to convert existing infrastructure to sustainable energy sources, not cling to toxic coal.