Gov. Jerry Brown likes to fancy himself as a champion of climate change and a defender of the city he once led. He now has a chance to show the depth of his conviction by taking a strong stand against a proposal that would contribute to global carbon emissions and pose a risk to public health in Oakland.

It is inexplicable and unacceptable that the governor has remained silent to date about plans to ship millions of tons of coal to a new port facility at the former army base in West Oakland. Brown knows as well as anyone that emissions from a coal plant in China has just as much effect on global warming as those from the American heartland.

The project planners' insistence that they are merely keeping their options open is simply not credible. It requires a suspension of disbelief to swallow the notion that the Utah Legislature would contribute $53 million in public money toward a deep-water port in Oakland for any reason other than assuring that mass quantities of its state's coal can get to markets far away. Perhaps Utah lawmakers have little concern about the
effects of coal dust on neighborhoods that already have high rates of respiratory problems.

Brown, the former Oakland mayor, should care. We'll withhold any conclusions about whether Brown is being influenced by his his relationship with project developer Phil Tagami until we hear his definitive position on this ill-advised venture.

We're waiting.
Speak up, governor.