Hello and thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Isabel Cortes and I am here on behalf of Senator Loni Hancock. I am delivering the following statement at the Senator’s request:

Senator Hancock supports the Oakland City Council’s resolution to oppose the transportation of hazardous fossil fuel materials, including crude oil, coal, and petroleum coke through the City of Oakland. Furthermore, the Senator also supports the Oakland Army Base Redevelopment Project, a project that would create thousands of jobs and that would empower the economic development of the City. The Senator supports this project, but what she does not support is the possibility of having a coal export facility as part of this project. The Senator’s concern is and has always been the environmental and health impact that coal would present to the natural resources and to the people in her Senate district.

More concerning to the Senator is the fact that West Oakland, the community where the coal export facility will be located, has been declared as a disadvantaged community by state law last year. The CalEPA has declared West Oakland as a disadvantaged community due to its high asthma rates and pollution levels. West Oakland residents are already 2.5 more like to get cancer due to breathing air which contains three times the amount of diesel particulate matter than air in other parts of the Bay Area. West Oakland residents also have the highest asthma rates than any other neighborhood in Alameda County.
Coal and coal dust is a hazard that contributes to a community that is already greatly impacted by pollution, asthma, and cancer. Additionally, workers who would be loading and unloading the coal are also greatly affected by coal dust and they would also be in danger of developing black lung cancer over the years.

The Senator would also like to point out that although coal is currently transported through California and exported abroad, nothing compares to 10 million tons of coal a year. Currently the maximum amount of coal exported in our ports is about 1.8 million a year. According to a report released by Sustainable Systems Research, LLC, assuming that about 10.5 million tons of coal is shipped each year, as much as approximately 646 tons per year of fugitive coal dust may be generated by the movement of coal through the port facility and shipping 10.5 million tons of coal annually will contribute approximately 30 million tons of CO2 each year to climate change.

Today, Senator Hancock urges the Oakland City Council to protect the health and safety of residents and to protect our environment.