

## Frequently Asked Health and Safety Questions about Coal in Oakland

**Will rail car covers keep Oakland residents and other communities safe from coal dust?**

*No. The effectiveness, reliability, and safety of covering coal rail cars are unproven. This proposed mitigation is experimental and will not reduce the 7% of dust that emits from the bottom hopper of rail cars. It is uncertain whether Oakland can require or ensure ongoing use of rail car covers.*

- There are no known uses of rail car covers for coal in the US, and there are no known tests of the efficacy, reliability, or safety of them protecting people from coal dust.
- The Federal Rail Association has no performance standards and no monitoring of rail car covers for effective prevention of coal dust emissions.
- The enclosed space created by covers may increase concentrations of dust and decrease convective cooling and could increase risk of spontaneous combustion.

**Will sprays on coal cars keep Oakland residents and other communities safe from coal dust?**

*No. The highest level of coal dust suppression that topping sprays/surfactants produce is 85%, but by the time coal cars arrive in Oakland, the topping agents will be worn off or degraded.*

- In actual practice, trains are not consistently loaded and sprayed correctly.
- The chemicals in these sprays are harmful to humans and aquatic life and can impair water quality as the trains pass through California's watershed.

**Will fully enclosed facilities keep Oakland residents safe from coal dust and explosions?**

*No. The Oakland Bulk and Oversized Terminal (OBOT) facility design is unproven in terms of effectiveness, reliability, and safety. Given nearby neighborhoods and key infrastructure, an explosion or fire could be catastrophic.*

- Coal is inherently combustible and enclosed spaces increase risk of explosion.
  - The OBOT terminal is located in Oakland's liquefaction zone – the area that will experience the most violent shaking and damage during an earthquake.
- OBOT's described operations suggest coal may sometimes be handled or stored outside.
- To reduce fire risks, coal dust must be sprayed with water and machinery such as conveyor systems must be cleaned, which can involve sweeping coal into the Bay. Both of these practices can cause contamination of the Bay, which is a source of food for some residents.

**If Oakland prohibits coal, will it just get shipped from some other place?**

*No. If coal does not come to Oakland, then it may well stay in the ground.*

- There are no alternate feasible ports from which to ship the proposed amount of coal.

**Will the coal in Oakland contribute to climate change?**

*Yes. The coal coming to Oakland will ultimately be burned and increase climate change.*

- Over the duration of the OBOT lease this coal will become a significant global source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that cause climate change.
- If GHG emissions are not cut, then climate change impact in Oakland will be significant.