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## **13 Utah Faith, Health, Environment, Community & Environmental Justice Groups Join Oakland, California Opposition to Coal Export Plan**

### **Groups Call on Utah Community Investment Board to Drop Risky & Polluting Scheme**

Salt Lake City, UT – Thirteen diverse faith, health, environmental, community & environmental justice groups with members across Utah today sent a letter to the Utah Community Impact Fund/Community Investment Board opposing the investment of \$53 million from four Utah counties to export up to six million tons of Utah coal out of Oakland, California each year.

Four Utah counties (Carbon, Emery, Sanpete and Sevier) borrowed \$53 million from the state's Permanent Community Impact Fund to pay a private company in California to give the counties access to a port in Oakland to ship their coal overseas. The money is an upfront payment to help cover the \$275 million costs of building the port, but the counties won't have an ownership interest. The contract would be over 66 years, but it isn't clear what additional costs the counties may have to pay over the life of the contract. The financial uncertainties combined with growing health and environmental concerns in both California and Utah makes this project highly risky and unacceptable.

The massive investment of Utah funds in a planned marine terminal at the former Oakland Army Base development site has sparked major opposition in Oakland among elected officials and the public who are concerned about the local air pollution and global climate impacts the transportation by rail, export and burning of coal would have.

Utah groups have now joined the fight to stop the coal export plan. In addition to sharing the health and environmental concerns being expressed about the project in California, the Utah opposition letter states in part:

“...we are concerned at the improper allocation of public mitigation funds for this unwise and controversial proposed project in Oakland that would harm public health and the environment in both states and is economically risky....It is thus clear that the proposed coal export terminal faces strong official and public opposition and protests as well as funding challenges that make the investment risky and unwise.”

"MESA members as well as others in Utah's rural counties are outraged and perplexed that such a serious & far reaching commitment of their current and future CIB funds could be undertaken for such an economically unsound & environmentally harmful project without their foreknowledge or input," said Ty Markham, Co-chair of Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance (MESA). "That their own county commissions would vote away their communities' share of \$53 million dollars of mitigation funds for many years to come is unconscionable. And to add insult to injury, their share was given away to benefit a handful of private-for-profit coal companies. These people, as well as those who live near Oakland's coastal port are understandably alarmed by such a risky and harmful project. Others too, living along the transportation route stand to lose quality of life as their health risks escalate with spill hazards & coal dust."

“Instead of giving brick and mortar projects to a deserving rural community in Utah, the CIB is providing a loan to a company in California, so it can ship another company's coal, to yet another company in a distant land across the Pacific Ocean. If anything is a stretch of a mission statement, this is it,” said John Weisheit, Director of Living Rivers.

The groups signing the letter on behalf of their members across Utah are Canyon Country Rising Tide, Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, Communities for Clean Air, First Unitarian Church of Salt Lake City, Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice, HEAL Utah, Living Rivers and Colorado Riverkeeper, Mormon Environmental Stewardship Alliance (MESA), Peaceful Uprising, Uranium Watch, Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club, Utah Moms for Clean Air, Utah Physicians for a Healthy Environment

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