

Reports From Speak Out Members Around the U.S.

Bay Area, California:

No Coal in Oakland!

The 14-year-long fight against building a massive coal export terminal in West Oakland has been reignited since June, when Trump signed off on \$700 million for coal projects nationwide. \$75 million of that is going to the export terminal project, which in 2016 was previously banned by the city after extensive organizing and backlash from the community.

If constructed, the terminal would be fed by uncovered trains coming from Utah through the East Bay, spreading toxic coal dust through the air everywhere they go. No community should be a sacrifice zone to support an industry that should be a relic of the past. We won't let it happen here!

Visit NoCoalInOakland.info for more information, upcoming events, and to sign an open letter calling for the Bay Area Air District to strictly regulate the terminal's construction and operation.

Baltimore, Maryland:

Environmental Protections May Exist— Until They Disrupt Business

If approved by a state commission, 60 acres of protected forest in Western Maryland will lose the designation “wildland.” The land could then be clear cut so a Florida energy company can build new transmission lines.

In Maryland, areas designated as wildlands must be preserved and remain “unimpaired” into the future. But last year, the energy company building the lines convinced Democrats and Republicans in Maryland’s government to work together to roll back the protections for the first time in the 55 years since Maryland wildlands were established.

The new power lines will not serve Maryland. They are being built to connect fossil fuel power plants in Pennsylvania to the data center boom in Northern Virginia. It’s wrong that politicians from both big parties remove regulations so rich companies can accumulate even more profit!

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren’t the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

Newark, New Jersey:

Newark Sues “Bad Landlords”: Too Little and Too Late

Newark Mayor Ras Baraka recently announced that the city was filing its first lawsuits against “bad landlords.” These are corporate landlords who illegally raise rents and/or have not fixed health and safety violations. While the administration is acting like they’re standing up for working residents, they’re really only doing the bare minimum.

All the city is doing is suing for monetary damages. There is no threat to the corporation’s ownership of buildings or ability to operate in the city. Aside from light fines being the only punishment, we also need to ask: what took so long? Baraka has been mayor for 12 years. Some of these “bad landlords” have been bad for decades, not just recently.

Seems like more of the same from Democratic politicians: way too little, way too late.

The Triangle, North Carolina:

“I Can Hire One Half of the Working Class to Jail the Other Half”

ICE wants to open a detention center in Hertford County, in the northeastern region of the state, by the end of this year. The facility would hold 1,400 detainees in an out-of-use correctional facility. GEO group, the prison company that runs Delaney Hall in New Jersey, has campaigned to reopen the facility.

Because the region is economically depressed and about a third of the population lives below the poverty line, promoters of the facility are cynically selling it as a way to provide desperately needed jobs. In other words, you can have jobs if you’re willing to lock up other poor workers!

They want different sections of the working class to tear each other down. But we don’t have to play their game! We can come together and stand up for our rights to live anywhere in dignity AND to have good paying jobs for all!

