

**BARBARA LEE**

13TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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AND POLICY COMMITTEE**  
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**COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET**



**Congress of the United States  
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May 13, 2019

Dear President Butner and Oakland Port Commissioners,

During my time in Congress, I have fought for low-income and minority communities where there are disproportionate rates of childhood asthma.

I recently learned that the Board of Oakland Port Commissioners is considering converting property that has historically been used for containers to an aggregate rock facility. Although, I don't generally weigh in directly on policy decisions before the Port, I do believe that you should seriously consider and study the potential environmental impacts on the West Oakland community, which is predominantly comprised of communities of color and those who are economically challenged.

I have long maintained that there is an inherent connection between environmental hazards and the quality of daily life of these communities. These decisions should not be made without properly determining if poor and minority communities are being inequitably burdened.

In my Congressional district, statistics show that the asthma rate is at the highest levels in America and children in West Oakland are seven times more likely to be hospitalized for asthma than children in the rest of California. The proposal before you has the potential to add dust particulates to the air to Berths 20-22. Added dust particulate matter to the air could exacerbate the existing problem.

In addition to our constituents, we need to consider the impact of dust and runoff entering the San Francisco Bay and consider how it may adversely impact fish and other aquatic species.

I urge the Commission to adequately study the environmental impacts of any proposed change of use at this site. I strongly urge you to require an EIR that takes these issues into consideration before entering into any long-term lease for Berths 20-22.

Sincerely,

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress