



Photo by Robert McKinney

Richmond Says “No” to Coal, and We’re All Better Off

During a routine patrol in 2011, Baykeeper’s on-the-water investigators discovered that a facility in Richmond had put massive, uncovered piles of coal right next to the Bay, where toxic coal dust was blowing into the water. Even worse, the dust was blowing into surrounding neighborhoods—communities already facing environmental injustices.

Baykeeper’s lawyers forced the shipping terminal to stop polluting the Bay. But then Richmond coal exports grew, reaching over a million tons in 2017, and the facility started storing coal in the streets, closer to communities. So we joined with local residents and environmental groups to deliver a long-term solution: convince Richmond to ban coal for good.

In January, the Richmond City Council did just that. They passed

an ordinance phasing out all storage and handling of coal within city limits.



Sometimes we have to fight the same polluter over and over.

Sejal Choksi-Chugh,
Executive Director,
Baykeeper

It’s a major victory for the health of the Bay and for local residents—coal pollution causes heart disease, respiratory failure, and lung cancer. It’s also a local win against the climate crisis, because burning coal for electricity is a potent source of climate pollution.

But Big Coal is a sore loser and

is already scheming ways to undermine Richmond in court. The City Council will need to stay strong to make sure the coal ban stays in place.

“Sometimes we have to fight the same polluter over and over,” said Baykeeper Executive Director Sejal Choksi-Chugh. “We helped craft Richmond’s coal ban, and now we’ll help the city and its residents keep this big win for the Bay.” 



The Levin facility in Richmond



In Good Times & Bad, Staying Strong for the Bay



As I write, the Bay Area is grinding to a halt due to the pandemic crisis. Our natural instincts may be to retreat—to block out bad news and keep loved ones safe. But polluters aren't pausing because of the shelter-in-place order. And neither will we.

Our scientists and lawyers are continuing to defend the Bay—remotely. We're helping Richmond move ahead with its coal ban in the face of an aggressive backlash from the fossil fuel industry. As the Trump administration tries to deprive the Bay's salt ponds of Clean Water Act protections, we're standing strong to prevent them from bending the law to benefit Cargill's bottom line. And we're watchdogging polluters via drones and kayaks.

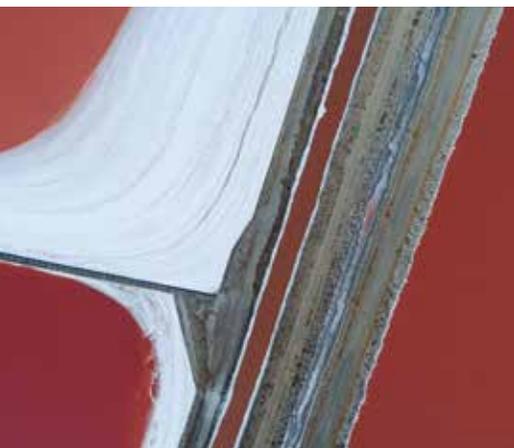
Standing up to powerful interests that would hurt the Bay is what we do. No matter how powerful the adversary, and no matter how serious the obstacles, Baykeeper will stay the course and keep fighting the good fight.

And I'm so glad you're right here with me, in spirit if not in person. Stay well.

Sejal Choksi-Chugh,
Executive Director

In Trumpland, Salt Ponds Aren't Water

In a bizarre act of make believe, Trump's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is claiming that pond water isn't water. EPA recently decided that the Redwood City salt ponds are land and therefore don't deserve Clean Water Act protection.



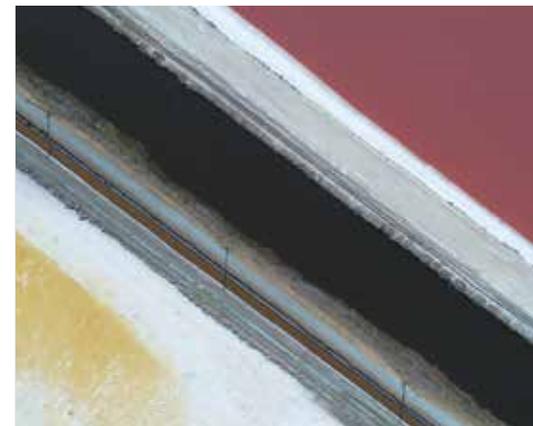
The ponds used to be wetlands. If the surrounding levees were removed, the area would return to its natural marshy state. EPA's decision is a thinly veiled attempt

to prevent this from happening, and to allow Cargill—the ponds' corporate owner—to bypass Clean Water Act safeguards and turn this potential wetland into a parking lot.

Cargill is also setting the stage for costly future disasters since, if developed, the salt pond area would be vulnerable to constant flooding due to sea level rise. Wetlands, on the other hand, would provide a natural buffer to rising seas for existing communities and a home for endangered species.

That's why Baykeeper is suing the Trump administration and fighting to overturn this decision.

But if Trump's EPA decision stands, it would set a precedent for corporations to pave other parts of the Bay, including salt ponds in Newark. So we're partnering



with Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge and others to defend this part of the Bay. We're determined not to let the Trump administration bend our vital clean water laws to allow Cargill to destroy critical Bay wetlands. 

Pictured: The South Bay salt ponds are the brightly colored ponds that you can see out the window of a plane flying over the Bay Area. Images by our aerial patrol partner, Autonomous Imagery.

Surprising Levels of Bacteria Pollution from Silicon Valley

During the last few rainy seasons, Baykeeper's scientists collected water samples from storm drain outfalls around the Bay. And we got surprising results.

Samples from the cities of Sunnyvale and Mountain View contained bacteria levels 50 times higher than the legal limits. The likely culprits are aging water

The samples revealed especially dangerous levels of E. coli bacteria, which can make people sick.

infrastructure and inadequate pollution controls, which allow raw sewage to run directly into Stevens Creek, Calabazas Creek, and other tributaries of San Francisco Bay.

The samples revealed especially dangerous levels of E. coli bacteria,

which can make people sick. And that's a big concern since these contaminated creeks run through publicly accessible parks and near

green infrastructure that captures pollution before it enters storm drains. In neighboring San Jose, our legal action resulted in the city



Photo by Steve Jurvetson, Flickr/CC

the Bay Trail. Bacteria can also harm wildlife, and Stevens Creek is one of the last remaining viable habitats for the threatened Central California Coast Steelhead trout.

That's why Baykeeper is taking action under the Clean Water Act. We're encouraging these two cities to fix their broken sewer pipes and install Bay-friendly

committing to large investments in green infrastructure and pollution controls.

Stemming the flow of contaminated runoff will reap benefits beyond just these cities—it's good for people and wildlife in every corner of the Bay. 

Pictured: A cyclist along Stevens Creek.

Take Action to Stop Coal Pollution in the Bay

Richmond recently took a strong stand to ban coal. This is significant progress in the fight to protect the health of Bay Area residents, reduce one of the main sources of the climate crisis, and end dirty coal pollution in San Francisco Bay.

Let Richmond know you're on their side by submitting a letter of support through our website at baykeeper.org/coal-action

Want to help us keep up the good work—no matter what comes next? Donate today to keep Baykeeper on the front lines, protecting San Francisco Bay from toxic coal.

Use the attached envelope or visit baykeeper.org/donate to make your gift.



Photo by Robert McKinney

Pictured: No Coal in Richmond's Janet Johnson, Baykeeper Legal Fellow Kayla Karimi, and Baykeeper Staff Attorney Ben Eichenberg outside the Richmond City Council.

SPRING/SUMMER 2020 BAYKEEPER NEWS

Newark salt ponds



REPORT
POLLUTION IN THE BAY
1-800-KEEP-BAY
hotline@baykeeper.org

San Francisco's Ocean Beach



Pacifica Pier



We recently conducted a new round of aerial patrols to investigate sea level rise vulnerabilities across the Bay, and we captured some breathtaking images. Ocean Beach and Pacifica are already experiencing severe coastal erosion that will only worsen with sea level rise. That's why Baykeeper is advocating to protect Bay sand and wetlands, which can help absorb rising tides. 

Wetlands at the South Bay's Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge



Photos by Robb Most for Baykeeper, thanks to our aerial patrol partner LightHawk Conservation Flying

