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June 18, 2020

Mayor Libby Schaaf
Members of the Oakland City Council
1 Frank H Ogawa Plaza, 2nd Floor
Oakland, CA 94612
SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL

RE: Sale of Coliseum Property to Oakland Athletics

Dear Mayor Schaaf and Members of the Oakland City Council,

The Sierra Club is concerned about significant environmental and environmental justice impacts presented by the Oakland A's proposed move from the Coliseum to a new stadium at Howard Terminal at the Port of Oakland. The Coliseum site is already approved for use as a stadium, is transit accessible, and would lift up surrounding East Oakland neighborhoods rather than displacing maritime businesses and workers. Howard Terminal, on the other hand, lacks transit access, is vulnerable to sea-level rise and contamination by toxics, and the A's have challenged environmental oversight in pushing the project forward. Remaining at the Coliseum site and building a new stadium there avoids these risks altogether.

The greenhouse gas emissions from transportation to and from the stadium is a major concern for a site that would attract an average of 20,500 people to each of 80+ home games per season. While both BART and Amtrak have stops right at the Coliseum, the Howard Terminal site is not currently served by public transit. The nearest BART stations (12th Street and Lake Merritt) are over a mile away and separated from the site by Interstate 880 and busy railroad tracks. The A's have not presented any viable transit solutions, offering up a far-fetched idea for an aerial gondola (which the city "[isn't counting on](#)" according to the San Francisco Chronicle) and a "transportation hub" with shuttle to BART — still a quarter mile from the stadium.

Another concern is Howard Terminal's contamination by toxics and the potential, as a result of a large construction project, for human exposure or pollution of the Bay. Prior industrial uses of the site contaminated it with toxics including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals and cyanide. The Department of Toxic Substances Control has a [Deed Restriction](#) on this site limiting it to industrial and commercial uses (residential uses are explicitly prohibited) and requiring review and approval for any plan that would disturb the existing cap — as the A's plan most certainly would. In internal discussions the A's have indicated they want to avoid remediation to a residential standard.

The project's location right on the waterfront raises another concern on our warming planet. With sea levels expected to rise dramatically in the coming decades, building right on the San Francisco Bay shoreline is foolish in the extreme. A [recent report](#) projects that we could see a rise of a half-foot by 2030 and up to seven feet by 2100, which could flood parts of West Oakland, including the Port of Oakland and Howard Terminal. Severe storm events and high tides will produce even higher increases. In addition, rising groundwater could increase the potential for liquefaction-induced damage during earthquakes.

Among the most troubling elements of the Howard Terminal project is its proponents' disregard for environmental review. In pushing their proposal to build at Howard Terminal, the A's have sought shortcuts and exemptions from environmental laws, threatening public health, the San Francisco Bay ecosystem, and the integrity of our system of public oversight. In 2019 the team pursued legislation to avoid standard evaluation processes for the project at the State Lands Commission and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (see [letter](#) co-signed by the chapter on this legislation) – before a draft Environmental Impact Report was even prepared. They have also applied for CEQA streamlining to fast-track environmental review (a bid that's currently tied up in [court](#)).

With all these concerns, we would urge the A's to take another look at the Coliseum site. The East Oakland community [wants the team to stay](#) and make good on promises to provide economic development and affordable housing. East Oakland residents have been good neighbors to the A's for decades. It's time for the A's to be good neighbors in return.

Respectfully,



Igor Tregub
Chair, Northern Alameda County Group
Sierra Club



Chance Cutrano
Vice Chair, San Francisco Bay Chapter
Sierra Club