

Date: August 15, 2023

To: Commissioners, Port of Oakland

From: Paul English, PhD, MPH
Alameda, CA 94501

Re: Comments on EIR for Oakland Airport Terminal Modernization and Development

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (dEIR) for the Oakland Airport Terminals Modernization and Development.

I am an environmental epidemiologist who worked for over 20 years at the CA Department of Public Health in environmental health and currently live in the city of Alameda. The “Significant and Unavoidable Adverse Impacts,” (Section 5.1) of the draft EIR lists impacts of the proposed project that could not be eliminated or reduced to a less-than-significant level with the incorporation of mitigation measures identified. These impacts include operational air quality emissions (ROG and NOx); operational 8-hour chronic non-cancer human health hazard effects for on-airport workers; and operational greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The Port has stated that since these emissions and risks will be due to increased aviation activity, they are not under control of the Port and the Port has no authority to regulate/mitigate them.

I am very concerned about these significant adverse impacts on human health. They are clearly avoidable if the project does not go through. Greenhouse gas emissions are supercharging extreme weather events, and this project would increase them, with severe consequences. We have recently seen out of control wildfires in west Maui, with approximately 100 dead and many missing. Wildfires have destroyed parts of Greece and Canada. The European Union has estimated that over 60,000 people died from extreme heat last summer in Europe, and it is expected that the toll will be greater this summer. Scientists have stated that recent heatwaves would have been “virtually impossible” without climate change, and that climate change makes many types of extreme weather event “more likely, more intense and longer lasting.”

I am also concerned about significant adverse impacts to on-airport workers. According to the dEIR, workers would be subject to hazards which exceed significance thresholds for exposure to 1,3-butadiene (which damages the central nervous system) and acrolein (which causes severe irritation and burning of the skin and eyes with possible eye damage).

The Oakland Airport expansion would contribute to the climate crisis which is impacting human health all over the world; please reject the new terminal and new gates as proposed in the Terminal Modernization and Development plan.

Sincerely,

Paul English

XR SF Bay Scientists