



<https://www.stopoakexpansion.org/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: WHY WE NEED TO STOP OAK EXPANSION

Q 1 - What is being proposed?

A 1- The expansion plan includes a new, third terminal with 16 additional gates, a 55% increase in capacity. It also proposes 1,000 new parking spaces. We **oppose this expansion** because it hurts community health and the climate.

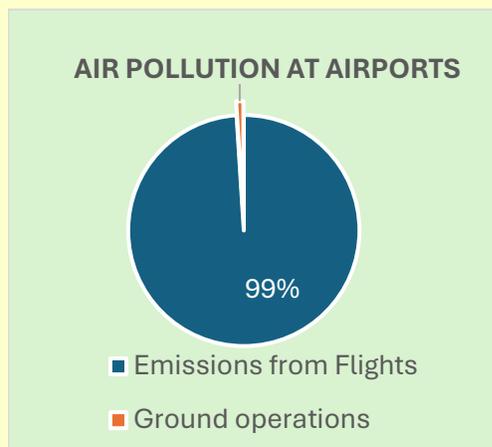
The **Stop OAK Expansion Coalition's 80+ members support airport modernization, including** reconfiguration and relocation of cargo and support facilities, upgrading the two existing terminals, consolidated ticketing, baggage and security facilities and more.

Q 2 - Who is proposing this expansion?

A 2- The Port of Oakland proposed the project in 2021, referring to it as an “expansion.” After environmental concerns were raised, the Port began calling it “modernization,” without making significant changes. The Port is an independent department of the City of Oakland, acting as trustee for Californians. It was created by the city in 1927 to oversee Port lands, including the airport.

Don't Be Fooled!

Airport officials say they plan a 50% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. But they leave out the airport's largest source of emissions - flights that account for 99% of a modern airport's emissions.



Q 3- Who opposes the plan and why?

A 3- In October 2023, the 80+ environmental, youth, community/neighborhood, religious, labor, grassroots and scientific organizations that make up the Stop OAK Expansion Coalition filed public comments that were highly critical of the Port's Draft Environmental Impact Report. Environmental, health, worker safety, noise, traffic, environmental justice and other concerns were cited. Objections and concerns were also raised by public agencies, including [the Alameda County Public Health Department](#) and the [Bay Air Quality Management District](#) and the City of Alameda.

Q 4 - What is the status of the proposed expansion? Is there an appeal? Who can stop it?

A 4 - The Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) was approved by the Port in November 2024. No significant changes were made, despite ongoing opposition. In December 2024 the Stop OAK Expansion Coalition filed a

lawsuit against the Port in the Alameda Superior Court. The legal challenge argues the Port failed to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by:

- ignoring the additional impact new toxic air contaminants would have on current health inequities in East Oakland compared to the rest of Alameda County, and failing to conduct a Health Impact Assessment as requested by the Alameda County Public Health Department,
- encouraging increased airline passenger traffic at a time when high pollution levels and greenhouse gas emissions are devastating communities worldwide,
- failing to adequately consider alternatives to expansion, and
- failing to account for significant new developments, including new EPA air pollution standards, new evidence of the high social cost of greenhouse gases and falling airline passenger traffic at OAK.

Communities for a Better Environment and Advocates for the Environment also filed suit. The litigation is expected to take about 18 months.

The plan must also be approved by the Federal Aviation Administration. In addition, the Oakland City Council could stop expansion by finding that it violates the City’s General Plan, including the Environmental Justice Element.

Q 4 - What impact would the Port’s expansion plan have on the environment and public health?

A 4 – The Port admits this expansion would dramatically increase air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and noise. **Greenhouse gas emissions would increase by 34% and harmful air pollutants by 63%.**

The Port’s Final Environmental Impact Report does not adequately address the air pollution, noise and increased traffic impacts of its plan. All these factors would impact the health of the community at large. But airport workers and people living close by or under flight paths (especially East Oakland) are impacted much more severely.

The [Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#) has called on the Port to do more to mitigate and offset greenhouse gas and air quality emissions in its plan. The Port tried to duck responsibility for addressing these impacts by saying it does not regulate plane emissions, although it acknowledges that health hazards of its plan are both significant and unavoidable. The Alameda County Public Health Department’s public comments said, “it must be acknowledged that expansion will directly lead to GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions and that *these are only unavoidable within the context of pursuing expansion.*”

Q 5 - How would neighborhoods near the airport be affected?

A 5 - While the entire East Bay would be hurt by the increased pollution and greenhouse gases, the Port’s proposal would have more severe negative impacts for two groups: people who live near the airport, primarily East Oakland, and people who live under the flight paths of planes flying in and out of OAK.

REDLINING IN THE SKY

The City of Alameda and an Alameda citizens organization threatened to sue the Port over the proposed expansion of OAK.

To avoid a lawsuit, in March 2025 the Port agreed to a [settlement](#) that commits to flight paths that avoid Alameda but would **add flights over the Fruitvale and East Oakland neighborhoods.**

Source: [Alameda City Council Meeting March 18, 2025](#)

As the Alameda Public Health Department has noted:

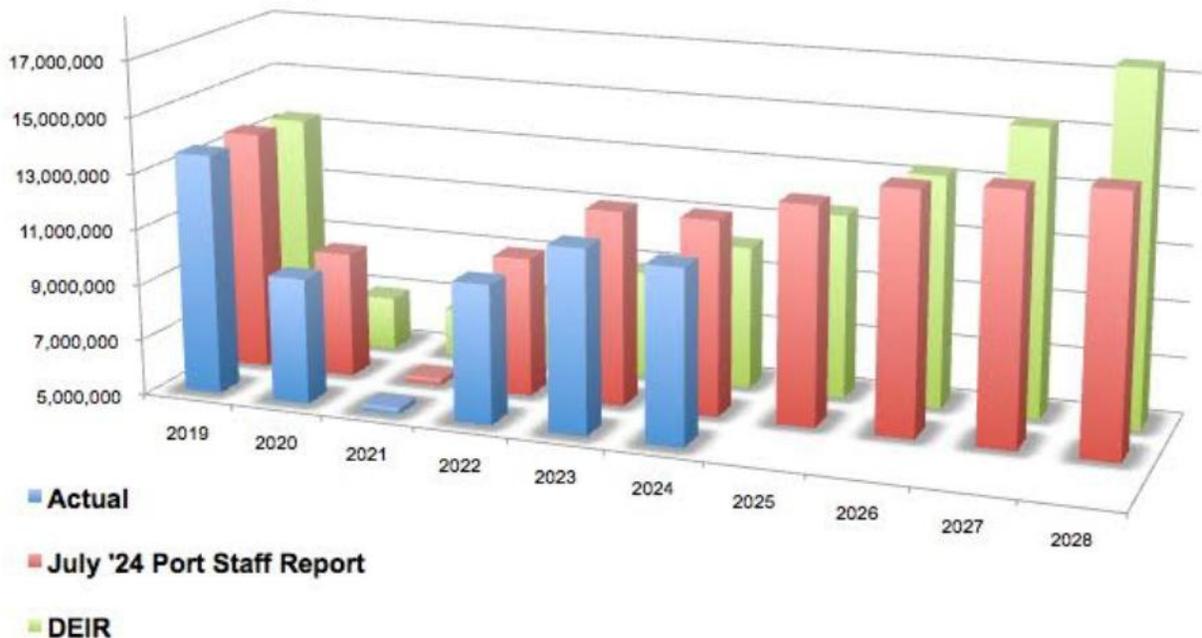
“Airport pollution disproportionately impacts communities of color. East Oakland is a predominantly low-income, Hispanic/Latino and African American/Black community located in the airport’s vicinity.” The families that live there are at high risk from the proposed expansion. The California Air Resources Board named East Oakland as a high priority community under Assembly Bill 617, which requires a Community Emissions Reduction Plan. It is also designated as a Disadvantaged Community under Senate Bill 1000.”

These designations are not surprising. **East Oakland has the highest rate of asthma in Alameda County, with three times the rate of emergency room admissions as the rest of the county. Heart disease, stroke, cancer and chronic respiratory disease are among the top causes of death.** All are associated with air pollution.

Q 6- What justification does the Port offer for this expansion?

A 6 - The Port claims, without supporting evidence, that “market-based projections” indicate that passenger traffic will more than double in the next 15 years, making expansion necessary. In fact, in the past few years [passenger traffic at OAK has failed to grow](#) at the projected rate. Recently, it has actually dropped. The Port’s own reports indicate that business air travel between northern and southern California has failed to return to pre-pandemic levels, in part because of web-based virtual meeting applications such as Zoom.

The bar graph below provides a visual comparison of three forecasts from the Port, based on the Draft Environmental Impact Report, the July 2024 staff financial report and the Port’s facts and figures section of its website. **It shows the Port’s passenger traffic projection is off by -23.3% for FY 2028.**



The Port also claims that expansion will create jobs and revenue for local government and businesses. The Stop OAK Expansion Coalition argues that a better plan could produce better economic and environmental benefits and fewer costs associated with increased pollution and associated health impacts. Good jobs do not make workers and their families sick.

Q 7 - How much would this expansion cost and who would pay?

A 7- The Port has not released information about the cost of its plan or how it would be financed. Airport construction is generally paid for by a combination of government (taxpayer) funds and loans from Wall Street. The Port would earn money to repay the loans through fees paid by airport users, including airlines and passengers.

Current Social Cost of OAK

OAK total flight emissions of 2.30 million tons of CO2 per year

X

social cost of carbon \$190 per ton

TOTAL = \$437 Million per year

Source of social cost:

<https://www.epa.gov/environmental-economics/scghg>

The Port has not accounted for the high social cost of carbon in its cost-benefit analysis. The [EPA says](#) this “includes the value of all future climate change impacts (both negative and positive),” ranging from human health effects to changes in the frequency and severity of natural disasters.

The Port has a track record of overbuilding and then having to refinance its debt. In the early 2000s the Port expanded the container shipping facilities, but the expected [growth in shipping did not materialize](#). A 2015 [report in the New Urbanist](#) found that the Port borrowed over \$1.4 billion for the shipping project, with the debt service costing \$100 million annually, amounting to one-third of the Port’s operating budget. The Port refinanced \$544 billion in debt in 2020.

Q 9 - What could a revised airport improvement plan do to limit climate change and create better jobs and neighborhoods?

A 9 - [StopOAKexpansion.org](#) supports sustainable, environmentally responsible air transportation as a key public service and benefit to the local economy. Modernization can provide jobs and boost the local economy. Expansion, on the other hand, will create expensive health care costs and a potential stranded asset, hurting the local economy. The Port of Oakland can be a leader in developing a 21st century, sustainable airport that addresses environmental justice, economic and transportation needs.

To achieve this, [the Port should engage community and key stakeholders](#) to develop a responsible alternative that would be real modernization, not ill-advised expansion. It must not allow airlines to unduly influence its priorities or to abandon the Port’s responsibilities to the community and its workers.

Q 10 - How can I get more information and help ensure Oakland’s airport benefits both East Bay residents and travelers?

A 10 - Visit [StopOAKexpansion.org](#) for more background and information on how you can get involved and make your voice heard. Contact City Council members and mayors in Oakland and the East Bay area and ask them to support calls for revising the plan and making a sustainable 21st century facility. <https://www.stopoakexpansion.org/take-action>

Published by Stop OAK Expansion Coalition May 2025

Sources linked to in this document can be accessed through the online version at <https://www.stopoakexpansion.org/flyers>