March 2, 2016

Dear Governor Herbert & Utah State Legislators,

We write to you as people of faith to urge you to be careful and wise stewards of our state’s resources and OPPOSE the use of state money to fund a risky and controversial San Francisco Bay business deal. We have learned that Utah State Senator Adams has recently released SB 246 that would use sales-tax revenue to underwrite a coal export facility in Oakland, California.

With China closing coal power plants and large coal companies going bankrupt, our state’s resources would be better spent helping us embrace the growing clean energy economy rather than propping up an industry that is on the way out.

In 2015, Utah ranked number 1 in clean energy job creation. Let’s rejoice in this good news and invest even a portion of the proposed $53,000,000 in wind, solar and geothermal jobs in rural parts of our state rather than support a coal export terminal that is unwanted in Oakland and could, in the end, be a colossal waste of taxpayers’ money. Can you imagine the huge leaps forward this state could make with that kind of forward-thinking investment in clean energy jobs in Utah?

By saying NO to SB 246, you will be honoring the voices and concerns of religious leaders around the world, including Elder Marcus B. Nash, member of the LDS Church’s Quorum of the Seventies, who wrote:

"This earth is provided to help each of us to return to Him, having grown through testing and experience to become more like Him, and enjoy eternal felicity with Him. Our test on this earth is whether we will choose wisely and follow God, treat His creations with respect, and use them to bless our fellow man and woman. The better we care for this world and all in it, the better it will sustain, inspire, strengthen, enliven, and gladden our hearts"
and spirits—and prepare us to dwell with our Heavenly Father with our families in a Celestial sphere, which members of the LDS Church believe will be the very earth upon which we stand today, but in a glorified state. May we care for this earth—our present and future home—well.”
http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/elder-nash-stegner-symposium

Funding a coal export terminal in a community where it is so strongly opposed and in a neighborhood that is already struggling with high rates of asthma and other respiratory illnesses is not using creation well nor are we blessing our fellow men and women. Continuing to invest in an industry that is devastating the earth and that is opposed to the values of our fellow human beings is neither wise nor respectful.

In his recent encyclical on environmental and economic justice, Pope Francis wrote: “We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels – especially coal...needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”

The Pope is joined by religious people from traditions all over the world who are urging an end to the burning of fossil fuels:

"Human behavior that overworks the Earth - especially the over-burning of fossil fuels --- crests in a systemic planetary response that endangers human communities and many other life-forms as well."
- Rabbinical Letter on Climate Crisis (signed by more than 300 Rabbis)

“Phase out greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible in order to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere”
- Islamic Declaration on Climate Change

"We must 'de-carbonize' our energy systems as quickly as feasible by replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy sources that are limitless, benign and harmonious with nature. We especially need to halt the construction of new coal plants, since coal is by far the most polluting and most dangerous source of atmospheric carbon.”
- Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change

On moral grounds, as well as for sound economic reasons, please oppose HB 246 and the proposed use of $53,000,000 from Utah taxpayers for the development of a coal export terminal in Oakland, California.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

SIGNATURES