

# Richmond Community News

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EDICIÓN ESPAÑOL PAGINAS 8-11

## Richmond Schools Stay Shut

*On-Line Classes: County Urges Wear Mask, Distancing, Wash Hands*

By MARGARET BROWNE, former Biology, Physics and Chemistry teacher at Kennedy High School

As the COVID-19 pandemic surges on, West County Supervisor John Gioia urges everyone to wear



a mask, to maintain social distance and to wash hands. The West Contra Costa

Unified School District is keeping schools shut until they are safe to reopen.

As reported in the *Washington Post* (Aug. 10, 2020), more than 97,000 U.S. children tested positive for the coronavirus in the last two weeks of July, according to data from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital

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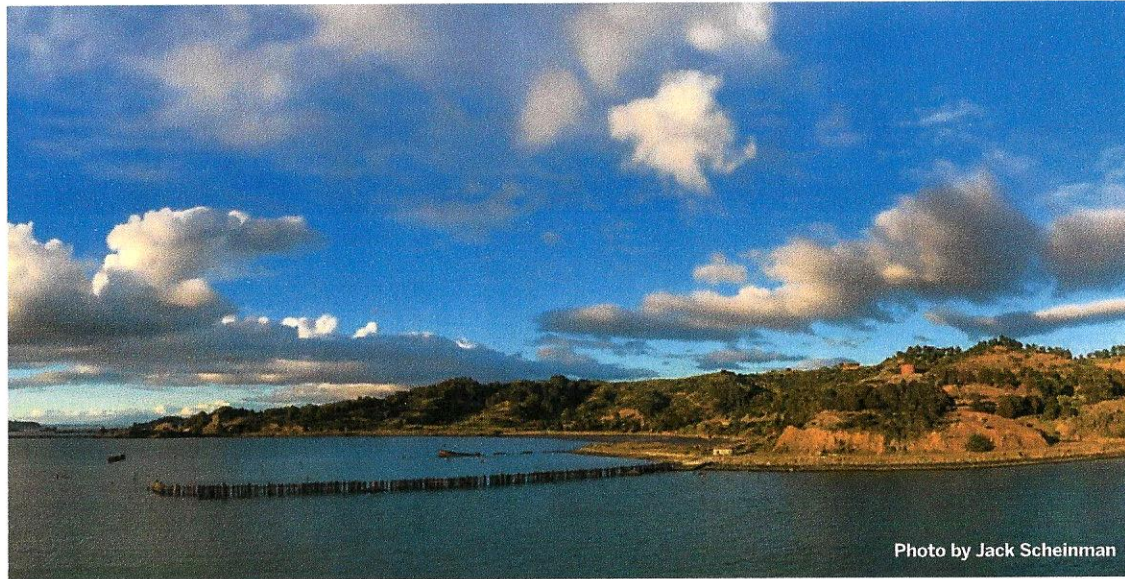


Photo by Jack Scheinman

## Racial and Climate Justice for Point Molate

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic collapse, the ongoing virus of American racism, and the climate emergency, many people are looking at land development choices in a new light.

The fight to Save the East Bay's Point Molate and keep this 413-acre public headland in public hands is,

By COURTNEY CUMMINGS, Richmond resident, Native American Activist and steering committee member of the Point Molate Alliance, and David Helvarg, Director of Blue Frontier, an Ocean Conservation group, and steering committee member of the Point Molate Alliance

like many land use decisions, also about institutional racism and environmental justice.

When it comes to racial equity, no one can seriously doubt that if Richmond California, a poor community

of color, were a wealthy white community this last unprotected natural headland on San Francisco Bay would have long ago been set aside as a regional park and visitor destination.

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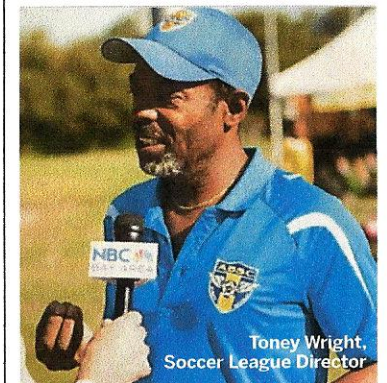
## Richmond Coaches Plead for Playing Fields for Richmond Youth

By CAROL TELTSCHICK, former Richmond Planning Commissioner

Two successful Richmond Coaches have been pleading with the City to provide more playing fields. They say Richmond kids deserve playing fields and access to parks and open space.

Thirty-one year Richmond resident Toney Wright believes this and has made it his life's work.

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Toney Wright, Soccer League Director



## Racial and Climate Justice

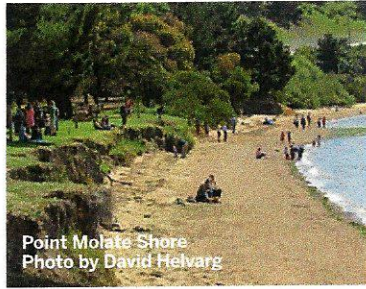
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Instead, it was almost sold off for a casino complex until the people voted overwhelmingly against that. Now it's part of a wider plan to privatize the city's shoreline for high-end luxury housing while leaving the city center and other areas with existing infrastructure and transportation little new housing for today's citizens.

With the costs of infrastructure for the isolated and undeveloped land between a bridge and an oil refinery, new homebuyers at Point Molate would require incomes of around \$250,000 to buy into the planned development of up to 2050 units according to the city's own fiscal analysis.

Richmond's average income is \$64,000. This huge disparity reflects a national wealth gap between white families and families of color including a history of economic discrimination in home loans and banking that's targeted African-Americans.

Historically Point Molate's beach served as a place where Black residents could escape segregation. Today, Point Molate Beach Park continues to be used primarily by families of color and more recently parents with children looking for a safe and natural setting to take their kids during the COVID-19 lockdown.



Point Molate Shore  
Photo by David Helvarg

***“Scientists warn the SunCal development will ruin the Point Molate near shore eelgrass habitat.”***

Environmental Impact Report put out by the developer. Still, the city has approved \$900,000 for a Sacramento-based corporate law firm to defend the widely challenged impact report. Point Molate is also the site of a historic 19th century Chinese fish camp, partly exposed by coastal erosion linked to sea level rise.

When it comes to the climate emergency, bad local land use decisions are a major driver of the problem. Point Molate is home to rare California native plants and animals including a California grassland watershed to be bulldozed by SunCal. It has one of the two highest concentrations of nesting Ospreys in the Bay Area, also the bay's most pristine eelgrass beds, home to herring and striped bass, leopard sharks, bat rays, sea hares, Dungeness crab, and more.

There are over 600 identified species of plants and animals at Point Molate that play a vital role in both



Courtney Cummings

But SunCal, the southern California developer looking to buy Point Molate, has released plans to locate a sewage pumping station where the beach parking lot is now located!

Fishing on the headland is another tradition for a multi-generational community of Black and Latinx fishermen and their families, but scientists warn the SunCal development will ruin the near shore eelgrass habitat.

Point Molate is also home to multiple sacred sites of the Ohlone people. But today's Ohlone were not consulted in the Draft

reducing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and contributing to human health. Protecting nature, science has shown, is one of the surest ways to address climate change as well as prevent pandemics.

The people of Richmond have overwhelmingly expressed their support for a public park at Point Molate through hearings, testimony, protest, survey and petition. A planned ballot measure was derailed by the pandemic lockdown.

Despite the rush to ink an agreement to sell off Point Molate before November's election, Richmond citizens deserve a chance to speak out against racism and environmental destruction and for a better future, by electing new city council members including candidates committed to Saving Point Molate and keeping our public lands in our well-washed hands. □