

## SEIU 1021 members help drive Alameda County to divest

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Organizers and workers from across Alameda County successfully pressured the Alameda County Board of Supervisors to vote to develop an ethical investment policy that, when implemented, could move tens of millions of dollars in investments out of companies profiting from genocide in Palestine and Israel's system of apartheid.

The county treasurer, who is an independent elected official, also announced that he had already dropped \$12 million in bonds in Caterpillar after sustained organizing from county residents and organizations pushing him to do so. He further pledged to dump the county's remaining Caterpillar bond, worth \$20 million.

Thousands of Alameda County residents signed petitions, made phone calls, and sent emails to their County supervisors calling on them to divest from companies like Caterpillar. In November, well over 100 people came out in person to pack the Board of Supervisors' hearing room in support of divestment. Even more attended the hearing this week, with supporters also filling an overflow room across the street.

Labor unions like SEIU 1021, as well as the Alameda County Labor Council, played a pivotal role in supporting the campaign. The Alameda County Labor Council, a regional cross-union body with an influential role in local politics, passed a resolution supporting local divestment campaigns.

“Since Israel began their most recent assault on Palestinians over a year ago, our members have been leaders in doing what we can to stand in solidarity with Palestine and in opposition the U.S. government’s role in these genocidal attacks—from organizing actions at our workplaces, to divesting our own dues from companies that profit from war, apartheid, and climate change,” said **Felix Thomson**, a shop steward with SEIU 1021. “Led by our over 100 rank-and-file members of SEIU 1021 Members for Palestine and including our local's president, we have made this a priority issue in our union. It's clear that the Board of Supervisors felt they had to pay attention to this level of organization from the workers who keep this county running.”

Alameda County is the first county in the U.S. to divest in this manner. And once this policy is fully developed and implemented, it will be the largest jurisdiction in the U.S. to have divested from Israel, following the Bay Area cities of Richmond and Hayward and a handful of other cities across the country.

SEIU 1021 has been a leader in this movement, calling for a ceasefire in December of last year, [passing a divestment resolution in June](#), and revising its investment policy statement.