

The Secretary

Senate Committee

Bill to Amend the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Dear Senators

I write to support the Bill to amend the EPBC Act 1999 to provide for water as a matter of national environmental significance in relation to coal seam gas and large coal mining on water resources.

However, the Bill is deficient in three regards:

1. All forms on onshore gas exploration and production should be covered, conventional and unconventional. The Bill should also apply to shale gas, tight sands and coal gasification projects.

All forms of onshore gas mining have impacts, potentially very serious on our aquifers.

2. The Bill should provide for cost benefit analysis by the Productivity Commission to all proposals, whenever the proposal triggers a National Environmental Significance.

Any cost benefit analysis should cover all externalities. I am unaware that any state government requiring either the proponent or any independent authority to undertake such work prior to approval of onshore petroleum and gas activities.

I refer you to recent work by an economist in the USA on road and health costs of shale gas mining:

<http://energypolicyforum.org/2013/04/01/externalities-of-shales-road-damage/>

<http://energypolicyforum.org/2013/04/03/shale-externalities-health-impact-costs/>

It is essential to the Australian public that ALL costs, including publicly funded infrastructure, agriculture and health costs, of such large scale developments are factored into decisions, rather than decisions being made with only the financial benefits to the state and large companies being considered. The cost benefit analysis should also include estimates of the taxation revenue lost by profits being shifted offshore by proponents.

Yours sincerely

Marion McClelland