

Dear Senators

I wish to call for the Environment Protection and Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 to be brought to the Senate and passed as soon as possible. I believe this matter needs urgent attention for the following reasons:

1. Water protection is crucial especially in a continent like Australia, where both droughts and floods occur on a large scale and regularly.
2. Mining of coal seam gas and other gases releases heavy metals and other toxins into the environment which pollute both the soil and water.
3. A recent example of the long-term harm such processes can cause was provided when the Mount Morgan abandoned mine in Queensland filled with water and overflowed into the nearby river carrying cadmium and other toxins and killing all the fish. This was reported on ABC TV.
4. The ABC programme reported that there are an estimated 5000 abandoned mines in Australia in need of remediation to prevent more such catastrophic environmental outcomes.
5. The cost of filling and capping the Mount Morgan mine was estimated to be hundreds of millions of dollars.
6. The cost of remediating environmental impacts of ANY new mining project needs to be factored in to the decision-making process about approval of the project.
7. It is clearly both unjust and unaffordable for Australian citizens to bear the financial costs of mining activity which leaves long-term and often permanent environmental impacts.
8. It is important that the costs, extent and duration of environmental damage arising from any mining activity be weighed against predicted economic benefits in the decision to approve that activity.
9. Claims that activities such as coal seam gas mining are "greenhouse friendly" need to be critically examined in light of both resources needed for extraction/ processing, and environmental impacts on atmosphere, soil, groundwater and waterways.
10. I am concerned that mining of coal seam gas and other gases, and of coal, has and will have negative impacts on local communities and on peoples' livelihoods.
11. I am concerned that such mining endangers water security and therefore food security and that impacts are longterm.
12. I urge that these laws be applied to mining of all gases, and to all recently approved coal and coal seam gas mining.
13. A great deal of environmental damage has already been done, and it appears the extent of this is not known. I believe it is important for all Australians, including future generations, that the environment be protected as much as possible.
14. I urge that landholders be given the right to refuse to allow mining activity on their property.
15. I believe thorough assessment of all impacts of mining is necessary including health, land use and land values, tourism, and agriculture.
16. Prioritising mining income and short-term job generation ahead of community health, welfare and future food and water security seems a dangerously short-sighted and reckless approach.
17. I urge the Government to insist on quality independent research into mining impacts before allowing further mining projects to proceed.
18. I further urge that stringent conditions be imposed on all future mining activities for protection and or remediation of the environment.
19. I believe that all Australians, including those in small communities, deserve to have their rights to a clean environment and to preserve their livelihood considered and protected.
20. Where these rights cannot be protected compensation should be made available.
21. I am particularly concerned about impacts of coal seam gas mining in the Gloucester area in NSW, on ground water and the environment generally. As revealed in the ABC programme "Four Corners" on 1/4/13, the environmental impact assessment process in relation to this was totally inadequate.
22. I urge the Senate to consider these concerns and those of many other Australians and act to protect our fragile environment.

Yours sincerely
Frances M. Fagan