

9 April 2013

To whom it may concern

**RE: Protecting water resources from coal seam gas and large coal developments:**  
**Senate Inquiry into the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation**  
**Amendment Bill 2013 (provisions)**

I am writing to express my support for the above inquiry amendment Bill to bring these new laws to the Senate, and for them to be passed before the election. I would also like to add my overall concern, and potential further support I believe would be ideal in relation to dissent of further Coal seam gas and large coal developments in this country.

I would like to begin by saying that as an Australian citizen, and a resident of Western Sydney, Blue Mountains, NSW, I have been overwhelming concerned and worried to the point of distress about decision making that has been occurring at a state level in regard to CSG and Open cut coal mining in NSW and national wide too. The present state Government and premier Barry O'Farrell seem to be almost heinous in their decisions to go forth approving projects against the apparent strong community opposition and overwhelming evidence, that these projects are both a risk to water health and to community health.

All of this too, is occurring in an environment whereby the citizens of Australia are very well aware and educated that our country should not be investing in these types of projects, further putting our natural resource conservation (and in particular our table water, aquifers and the great artesian basin along with all catchments and drinking water) at massive risk to toxic pollution and irreparable damage, and in light of this evidence we should be investing in cleaner, renewable options for energy production both domestically for provision of energy and for local employment and also for export. On this level it seems to be a severe case of greed, such a gross example of short sighted gain, without consideration for environmental concerns, that the state government has given the green light on so many projects without proper assessment in light of these obvious threats to the natural environs.

I living west of Sydney and also having an honours degree in Landscape Management and Conservation, I understand the importance of maintaining the health of drinking water and of our biodiversity within catchments. The groundwater is also significant in that it feeds many natural above ground water systems also including drinking water and for irrigation and for other important community services and land uses in many circumstances. We cannot afford under *any* circumstances to ever put the health of our water, ground water and catchments at risk, especially when the prevalence of protection of water resources is becoming of paramount importance in today's world, where clean water resources are becoming threatened and progressively scarce. In this country we also cannot afford such risks to water health due to our cyclic changes with long periods of drought where, during these times our water, in its lack of abundance, needs to be particularly cared for in every way, both in its health and availability. Coal and Coal Seam Gas (CSG) mining uses thousands of megalitres of water in its production, which

to me *this* exploitation of the water resource, alone, without even having to take into consideration the toxic pollutive effects, gives rise to a very good reason for being strict and in many cases not approving such projects.

The industries of Coal Seam Gas, in particular, are rapidly expanding in a unprecedented way, of which our country has never before experienced. I believe there is NOT enough being done to protect our communities to ensure their water security will be safe and not effected by the practices of CSG which in the United States and in Queensland has already shown strong evidence that CSG pollutes ground water and effects the health directly of the citizens of the community in those gas fields and surrounding areas.

So I request once again, please protect our water, please maintain control over state decisions of these mining practices in relation to protecting the important resource of our water for our health, as I have stated, my experience of the NSW government of decisions on these mining applications has been one of gross neglect and obvious short term monetary gain. It is a lawful duty of our National Government to protect its own citizens and certainly not put them at risk of being poisoned or in a situation of having lack of water availability. This decision must be passed and must be enforced in all situations, and I believe this should also apply to all projects existing and already approved too, as they should be assessed and re-assessed given the recent information that emerged in the 4 corners edition on Coal Seam Gas where it was leaked that many of the CSG mining projects in Queensland were pushed through without careful consideration of the impact on groundwater. I believe this is also would be a common (mal) practice throughout the industry. This is a gross neglect of law and this country could be held liable if something is not done about it. I request that there should be a moratorium on all CSG mining and a ban on fracking given this evidence, so that all of this can be investigated thoroughly.

Yours sincerely  
Sharon Renee Wilkinson  
BLMC Honours