

Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Alliance Inc.

(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984)
Incorporation No. INC9885807

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Senate Committee

Inquiry: Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013 [Provisions].

The Barrington-Gloucester-Stroud Preservation Alliance (BGSPA) strongly supports this Bill and would like to see it passed quickly through the Senate.

Without exception coal and coal seam gas developments have significant impacts on groundwater and surface water. Water is an issue that extends beyond state boundaries and is too significant to be left to competing state governments to manage. It is imperative that the Australian Government has overarching control of this vital resource.

BGSPA is particularly pleased that the bilateral approval provisions of the EPBC Act cannot apply to coal and coal seam gas developments that impact on water resources, and that there have been some improvements to the exemptions.

BGSPA wants to ensure that the exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Qld and AGL's CSG projects in Camden and Gloucester in New South Wales, are not exempt from it. Therefore, we would still like to see minor amendments to remove s22 2 b) and d) if possible.

BGSPA recognises that there are other amendments that would substantially improve the Bill, that may be required in the future, such as:

- Amending the Bill to cover all unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, and unconventional coal mining;

- Strengthening the role of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee;
- Defining significant impacts on water resources;
- Introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts;
- Including a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to approval.

Graeme Healy
Chairperson