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File:
Date:

Submissions
30 April 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By Email: ec.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir or Madam,

Glencore's Proposed Carbon Capture and Storage Project

I refer to your email dated 9 April 2024 inviting Council to make a submission to the Senate Environment & Communications References Committee (committee) regarding the inquiry into Glencore's proposed carbon capture and storage project.

On 21 February 2023, Council lodged a submission to the EIS Coordinator of Queensland's Department of Environment and Science, opposing the proposed Surat Basin (Glencore's) carbon capture and storage project on a number of grounds.

The request to lodge a submission to the committee was considered at Council's Ordinary Meeting held on Wednesday, 24 April 2024 and Council resolved to delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officer to resubmit Council's previous EIS submission regarding the Surat Basin (Glencore's) Carbon Capture and Storage Project as its submission to the Senate Inquiry reaffirming its opposition to Glencore's proposed carbon capture and storage project.

As a result of this Council resolution please find attached Council's previous EIS submission as its submission to the Senate Environment & Communications References Committee regarding the inquiry into Glencore's proposed carbon capture and storage project.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact do not hesitate to contact me on

Carl Manton
Chief Executive Officer
Goondiwindi Regional Council



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Date:

21 February 2023

The Chief Executive
Department of Environment and Science
GPO Box 2454
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Attention: The EIS Coordinator (Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage Project)

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: EIS SUBMISSION - SURAT BASIN CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE PROJECT

Goondiwindi Regional Council (GRC) opposes the proposed Surat Basin Carbon Capture and Storage Project for key reasons as detailed in this submission below. Council responds to the Glencore Carbon Transport and Storage Corporation Pty Limited (CTSCo) draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Council acknowledges efforts to mitigate the impact of anthropogenic climate change and supports in principle collective efforts to reduce and compensate for atmospheric carbon emissions on a regional, national and global scale. Greenhouse gas emissions are a global issue and despite our nation making significant contribution through multiple mechanisms, Council holds the firm view that projects proposing sequestration technology should be considered with an abundance of caution. By way of comparison, recent application of emerging underground technology in the resource industry at the failed Linc Energy Hopeland site just over 100km away from the Proponents' site, serves as a stark reminder of the permanent damage that can occur to aquifers when unanticipated consequences result from underground projects.

Community Consultation

Details of the proposed CTSCo trial project were initially identified through a direct approach by the Proponent to Council last year. More recently, concerned ratepayers representing significant agricultural businesses within our region have highlighted their concerns with Council. Council is disappointed that nearby landholders were not targeted by the project's public engagement plan. Further, it is Council's understanding that important consultation providing information about the project was not undertaken with existing licensees holding allocation from the precipice sandstone formation of the Great Artesian Basin (GAB) across a larger geographic area. It is Council's position that the EIS document misleads the reader in relation to the suitability of the quality of water in the aquifer and the extent to which it is relied upon for water supplies across the GAB.

Targeted Water Supply Aquifer

Following review of the EIS documents, Council is particularly concerned at the identification of the target Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) reservoir within the GAB and identification of the Precipice Sandstone formation as a saline water aquifer. It is clear that the precipice sandstone aquifer currently supplies reliable stock and town water supplies broadly across the GAB. Water quality adequately meets requirement for stock water supplies, particularly for intensive livestock operations, and is one of the few alternatives available for expansion in our Council region.

Further, overlying aquifers are critical to the viability of much of the economy of regional Queensland and to Goondiwindi Regional Council. Council is concerned that these critical aquifers could be inadvertently impacted by the pilot project targeting the underlying formation. Additionally, damage to bore and pumping infrastructure through corrosion and loss of gaseous carbon dioxide from the proposed storage through nearby licenced or abandoned facilities are credible risks of the project.

Impact on the Regional Economy

In common with our neighbouring local Councils of Moree Plains, Southern Downs, Western Downs and Toowoomba, primary production is central to the regional economy and is a major contributor at State and Federal level. Agriculture offers continuing opportunity for growth, particularly for aligned industries. The GAB has long been the lifeblood for much of Queensland and Northern New South Wales and any project with any potential to impact the GAB must be dealt with the utmost caution. Recent favourable seasonal conditions and resulting short term capacity of surface water supplies have not dulled Council's focus on water security, particularly for existing and new enterprises and those dependant on water supplies from the GAB.

Road Transport Risk

The EIS identifies that road transport will be utilised to transport compressed gas from the source at Millmerran Power Station. While the identified route utilised the State Highway Network, the local road network could be utilised to significantly reduce travel distance but would not be desirable. Council holds concerns that unless transportation operations are closely managed, additional traffic could utilise Council's network, creating road safety and maintenance risk. Expansion to a full-scale project would clearly increase risk associated with road transport of the compressed gas.

While not the focus of the EIS, the pilot project is clearly a precursor to a much larger project with significantly expanded storage capacity and zone of influence. Goondiwindi Regional Council expresses opposition to the current project and consequent expansion to a full-scale sequestration project.

Council recommends use of the "precautionary principle" in consideration of the draft EIS. It is Council's position that the application to proceed with the carbon sequestration project within the GAB presents unacceptable environmental risk. While the benefits of carbon storage are accepted, Council position remains that risk of serious and irreversible environment damage outweighs benefit, given current experience with the technology. Examples offered in the EIS do not include water supply aquifers, particularly formations with the vital importance and physical extents of the GAB. It is recommended that the pilot project should not be approved.

Mayor
Goondiwindi Regional Council