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The Secretary
Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: INQUIRY INTO ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLIES FOR SOUTH EAST
QUEENSLAND - TRAVESTON CROSSING DAM INFORMATION**

Purpose

The purpose of this letter is to provide information for the Senate Inquiry.

As a resident of the Mary Valley for 23 years, I wish to share my feelings about the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam on the Mary River.

I believe that this proposal is flawed on all grounds – environmental, economic and social.

Many experts with outstanding qualifications and knowledge of the area have come forward with information regarding the potential environmental damage that this dam will cause. It has been well documented that the Mary River Turtle, Mary River Cod and the Lungfish will suffer from the alterations to their habitat that will occur as a result of this proposal. The general consensus is that this dam will be incredibly shallow which will generate further environmental problems in terms of weed growth and mosquito and cane toad breeding. The dam must affect the flow of the river downstream and the consequences of this on the important estuarine areas of the Great Sandy Straits will be drastic. The State Government does not seem to recognise this potential for devastation of the coastal ecosystem. Further environmental damage will of course occur by inundating land that is currently above water, causing dislocation to many native animals and birds.

On economic grounds, it would appear from independent studies that have been conducted, e.g. the one commissioned by the Mayors of affected Councils, that the final cost per litre of water from this dam is going to astronomical when compared with other options. This alone is probably sufficient reason to reject the proposal.

The social dislocation which has been caused already by the proposal and the Government's rough shod approach to local people is enormous and possibly immeasurable. These effects will continue to be magnified in the future if the proposal goes ahead. It is devastating to see people who are the backbone of the small communities of Amamoor, Kandanga and Imbil being told that the properties they have toiled on and the future they have created for their children will count for

nothing and be covered by water. This is not just a case of “Not In My Backyard” – this is not just a few households but close to 1000! The resulting economic effect of the loss of these households and productive farms on the surrounding area will also be catastrophic. The Mary Valley is one of the richest farming areas in Queensland and is home to one of the State’s largest dairies at Goomong but it would appear that the Government is not interested in protecting the people who supply our food. It also seems that the State Government has also underestimated the cost of re-routing major infrastructure such as roads, railway lines and electricity which would be necessitated if the dam went ahead.

I have been to some of the Dam information sessions at the Gympie Pavilion and participated in the “Flotilla of Hope” on the river last year. After listening to both Government representatives and various people who are against the dam but who present logical, reasoned and substantiated arguments, it seems to me that the Government has made this decision for whatever reason (including the political one that this is not a Labor seat) and in the cold hard light of day now refuses to be swayed by either the public opposition or to accept that perhaps there are other alternatives. There has been some investigation into the raising of the wall at Borumba Dam which would appear to be a much better alternative. Even to a non-scientific person it is obvious that a dam in a naturally steep area, where there is granite to form the floor and part of the sides, would have a much better chance of catching and holding water than a dam built in a flood plain, with no bedrock just layers of silt.

I believe that the proposal to build a dam at Traveston Crossing is flawed and the Government should not proceed any further. It is actually hard to believe that the Government can actually start acquiring property when they don’t have approval to build the dam yet and no environmental studies have been done! It seems that perhaps they are really using “bully boy” tactics to push their own agenda.

One fear I do have is that, given that the Howard Government has mentioned the Sunshine Coast as a possible site for a nuclear power station, there could be a hidden agenda for the Federal Government to approve the dam and then build a nuclear plant in this area as these plants are reputed to use vast amounts of water.

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of the Senate Inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Helen Clatworthy