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From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Friday, 10 July 2015 4:49 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Miss Katherine Moore
[REDACTED]

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Dear Committee Members,

As an urban dweller relying almost entirely on farmers to supply my food, the idea of doing anything that would endanger our agricultural industries is appalling and terrifying. Unconventional Gas (UCG) drilling puts our air, soil and water at risk of serious harm, impacting our agriculture and tourism industries, community health and the environment. I have both read and heard first-hand accounts from communities who have been adversely affected by UCG drilling, and I do not believe that it can ever be done safely. I do not support any form of UCG drilling, and recommend that Victoria categorically ban all UCG drilling permanently.

Considering the uncertainty surrounding many of the long-term effects of UCG drilling, it is impossible to understand fully the nature of the risks involved. What we have seen of negative health impacts and contamination events, however, provides strong evidence that the industry is harmful and dangerous.

Health Risks

It is known that public health risks include the use of harmful chemicals in the drilling process, the release of proppants, such as silica, and particulates into the air and flowback of hydraulic fluid mixture. When inhaled, silica can cause silicosis, and exposure to silica dust is a known cause of lung cancer as well as potentially contributing to autoimmune diseases and kidney disease. Flowback contains chemicals originally injected, as well as contaminants such as BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene), radioactive materials and heavy metals. Severe BTEX exposure can result in damage to vital organs as well as being strongly linked with leukemia and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Radioactive materials, including known carcinogen radium, are found in gas wells.

Commercial Viability

The areas of Victoria most likely to contain UCG resources are south of the Great Dividing Range, and are home to a significant proportion of our most valuable dairy and grazing country, and fruit and vegetable production. There are also thriving tourism industries in many of these areas, which reach from the South Australian border across to Bairnsdale.

The commercial viability of UCG is by no means guaranteed, as companies have been searching unsuccessfully for commercial quantities for decades. Thus, the potential economic return from the industry is minimal, especially when compared with the industries already in operation over the area, and the probable adverse impacts of UCG on those industries. The reward does not justify the risk.

Environmental Risks

The water table is at risk of a significant drop due to consumption by the industry; this will have unprecedented effects on agriculture as well as the natural environment. The water that is extracted is then contaminated by chemicals such as BTEX mentioned above, and often makes its way back into the ground. This leads to soil contamination, further impacting the ecology of the area. UCG drilling requires land to be cleared, requiring the sacrifice either of forest or of agricultural space. This further impacts the biodiversity of the area. Greenhouse gases and other pollutants are released into the air, further contributing to climate change. Hydraulic fracturing has further been shown to cause seismic activity leading to significant earthquakes.

I thank you for taking this submission into consideration, and trust that you will recommend no UCG drilling of any type take place in Victoria, and institute a permanent ban.

Regards,

Katherine Moore

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File1:

File2:

File3: