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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 10 July 2015 6:02 PM  
**To:** EPC  
**Subject:** Finalised copy of submission for inquiry into OUG

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SUBMISSION TO THE VICTORIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE INQUIRY INTO ONSHORE UNCONVENTIONAL GAS IN VICTORIA.

NAMES- TREVOR JAMES FLINT [REDACTED]

DIANNA FLINT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

We are writing to you to express our concerns about the exploration, extraction, production and rehabilitation for onshore unconventional gas (OUG), not only in our region, but Victoria as a whole.

We are Victorian farmers and proud to be so, running a mixed farm which produces prime lamb, premium pork and beef. We have two properties in the Seaspray/Longford area. Our concerns are real and cover many issues.

PEOPLE - Firstly on "people" we would like to point out the enormous stress, anxiety, energy and the distortion of communities that the threat of this industry has had on many families and individuals.

It is very real and very upsetting when not acknowledged as a serious health problem already created by the OUG industry. People are only trying to protect their place of belonging, families, history, the setting they choose to live in and the jobs they choose to embark on. There are people who have worked a lifetime; proud to have created their own destiny. Our future generations should have the right to experience that very same thing. They need to be able to dream, achieve and be rewarded. This usually involves working, investing, borrowing money, taking out insurance policies, becoming a part of wider communities (which is usually a personal investment). We ask you; will the OUG industry affect the positiveness of these issues, and how will the government ensure that people and communities are not going to be worse off physically, mentally, economically and environmentally?

AGRICULTURE – No way can OUG activities and agricultural production of foods for domestic and export markets co-exist. There has been a massive failure from agricultural

bodies, governments, government departments and OUG industry itself to acknowledge the very existence of stringent regulations and auditing on food producers not only in Victoria, but nationally.

As ex dairy farmers, we are aware of regulated programs such as HACCAP which get routinely audited for chemical and animal medicine use on the farm. Being meat and livestock producers we have been audited and know only too well the seriousness of the 'LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION ASSURANCE NATIONAL VENDOR DECLARATION,' (LPA/NVD). This underpins Australia's meat and livestock FOOD SAFETY REPUTATION; (no contaminants get in the food chain). As meat and livestock producers, our responsibility is to be accurate when answering all questions on the forms. Any false, misleading or UNVERIFIED statements may result in prosecution or civil action. These are legal documents we, as meat and livestock producers sign off on. The LPA/NVD is in place not only for traceability but to ensure all consumers; domestic and overseas, are guaranteed that no contaminants are in the food they consume. Agriculture and OUG cannot co-exist due to the fact that whatever chemicals used or bought up to the surface, called 'naturally occurring' by the OUG industry, cannot be guaranteed safe and has huge potential for entering the human food chain. This is real, it is serious and it is underestimated. We ask you, what will the government do to protect all food producers and help them to continue to produce safe eating food for all? We cannot stress enough that this is extremely concerning for us. It is proven that some chemicals eg: arsenic, do accumulate over years in the soil. When livestock pick up some of that contaminated soil, the chemical hibernating in the soil becomes active again when it reacts with the animals stomach acid, therefore contaminating the food chain.

**WATER** – Humans and animals have a right to access fresh, drinkable water known as 'Potable Water'

Healthy water means healthy people, animals, flora and fauna. The slightest existence of chemicals or too higher concentration of minerals in drinking water can cause an endless list of health and production problems. As meat and livestock producers, the importance of quality drinking water for animals is significant to the animal's welfare, the animal's productivity and quality. If a human, animal or plant has access to good healthy water, it will consume the required amount to maintain proper hydration therefore keeping all vital organs healthy and functioning correctly. If human, animal or plant only has access to water tainted with chemicals; both synthetic or naturally occurring, it will only consume the bare minimum to sustain life and eventually, dehydration and daily intake of contaminants will cause massive health issues. Surface and underground water are precious to all living creatures on earth and again, governments and UOG industry are failing to acknowledge this. "Only 3% of the world's water resource is FRESH WATER, the remaining 97% is ocean. Of that very small 3%, 1% is surface water and 30% is groundwater. The rest, is 65% ice caps and glaciers and 4% is known as other!" (reference – [www.srw.com.au](http://www.srw.com.au)). The percentages speak very loud and should not be disrespected and this is one reason why the UOG industry must be banned in Victoria. Here in Gippsland the underground water supply is suffering hugely. Old salt is now being drawn up and the aquifer is not replenishing at the rate it is being used. We have problems, they must not be ignored. What will the Government do to protect the precious surface and ground water we currently have to sustain life and food production for now and the future? This is real!

**ENVIRONMENT** – WOW, absolute no to the OUG industry. The beautiful, unique, precious environment is not ours to destroy. In our area of Gippsland near Seaspray we have a Ramsar listed wetland, known as 'LAKE REEVE'. Might we remind you, as documented: Australia's obligation under the Ramsar convention: legislative support for wetlands. One point in particular: Arrange to be informed at the earliest possible time if the ecological character of any listed wetland has changed, is changing or is likely to change as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference, and report any such

changes to the Ramsar convention. The state and federal governments should know this. If you don't then you would be failing the environment, the people, the animals, the wildlife and the precious potable water that sustains all.

In conclusion, governments, departments and OUG industry need to start acknowledging lots of things that are real and happen every day and need to understand and listen to the very people that observe, work and live with these concerns we have. You know the economic value of agriculture and other industries and how sustainable they have been, do not ignore them any longer for they have been ignored for too long. You have to get this right for there is too much at risk.

We ask you, what will the government do to protect all that is at a very real risk?

Thank you,

Trevor and Dianna Flint.