

[REDACTED]

From: Deni Collyer [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 4 July 2015 10:14 AM
To: EPC
Subject: My submission to Parliamentary Enquiry into UCG in Victoria
Attachments: UnconventionalGasMiningSubmissiontoVictorianGovernment.docx

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Thanks for accepting my submission & I expect your committee to totally reject the idea of "opening the floodgates" to Unconventional Gas Mining in Victoria.

I trust you all to look after the "health" of our Victorian environment and I await the Committee's findings.

Sincerely

Deni Collyer

[REDACTED]

The message is ready to be sent with the following file or link attachments:

UnconventionalGasMiningSubmissiontoVictorianGovernment.docx

Note: To protect against computer viruses, e-mail programs may prevent sending or receiving certain types of file attachments. Check your e-mail security settings to determine how attachments are handled.

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY ENQUIRY INTO ONSHORE UNCONVENTIONAL GAS MINING IN VICTORIA

Herewith is my submission to your Committee of Enquiry.

My name is Deni Collyer and for the last 8 years I have lived at [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Victoria. I have three extended families and 5 absolutely adorable grandchildren and I believe its their right, and our responsibility, to provide them with a safe environment in which to live. My family and I have always been vitally interested in the health of our planet and I must say we fear the possibility of Onshore Unconventional Gas Mining within Victoria and indeed in Australia. I plead with the Committee to view the documentary “**Frackman**” – it appears from this documentary that once Mining Companies are “in” they believe that its their right to “spread their joy as far and wide as they possibly can” without any respect for landowners in their way. So I believe that Victoria should continue to enforce a total ban on Unconventional Gas Mining in Victoria forever.

This enquiry offers us our best chance to stop this industry before it gets established. Based on the experience in other parts of the world where the industry is more advanced, including here in Australia and in North America, I do not believe that this industry can co-exist safely with other land uses like farming, conservation and tourism.

The areas of the State of Victoria that are most likely to contain UCG resources are south of the Great Dividing Range. These areas, stretching from the South Australian border to Bairnsdale, includes much of our best grazing and dairy country, and a considerable portion of our fruit and vegetable production. **Why would we consider putting some of our best farmland at risk by allowing this industry to proceed for only minimum royalty returns to the State?**

It is clear that many problems with the industry may take years, and potentially decades, to be fully understood. It would be reckless to unleash this industry on our State with all the evidence that is emerging about contamination events associated with UCG drilling. This process fundamentally industrialises landscapes. Gas drilling operations require access roads, drill pads and processing equipment, waste ponds and water treatment sites, flaring pits, and pipelines. It will profoundly change the rural nature of the areas where it is allowed to become established.

UCG drilling is proposed by the industry across large sections in the south of the State. These are the areas that receive the best rainfall and have lower average temperatures compared with the north of the State, and are the areas experiencing the most rapid population growth. The State Government is encouraging people to move to regional centres, and natural population growth will continue to see regional centres grow, especially in the milder and coastal sections of the State.

Based on the experience of farmers in Queensland where the coal seam gas (CSG) industry has already become entrenched and its problems are well documented, I do not accept the premise put forward by the industry that UCG operations can peacefully co-exist with farming. While any potential onshore gas industry is unlikely to be of a scale of what is already found in sections of Queensland, we can expect that any impacts will be felt keenly given the relatively higher population density and smaller size of the average farm here in Victoria.

Victoria already has a good supply of conventional gas from offshore sources. We currently use a lot of gas. Natural gas accounts for 19% of all energy used in Victoria and our consumption is expected to increase. Victoria has the largest residential gas demand of any Australian state, which is a result of various factors, including our relatively cooler climate, and the poor energy rating of much of our existing housing stock.

Solar and Wind Power need to be immediately accessed even though our current Prime Minister and The Environment Minister and the Treasurer of our Federal Parliament have negative reactions and attitudes to anything Solar/Wind.

A responsible Energy Policy for Victoria would rule out any further coal, gas or oil development.

Many European countries have **BANNED** this form of Mining: France, Spain, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria and Italy. Even within our close neighbor New Zealand Christchurch and Kaikoura are "Frack Free" cities.

Water is also a major issue, and a necessity to us all. Apart from the question of industry accessing large volumes of water, there is also the matter of quality of ground water. Based on the experience in Queensland, concerns about contamination of aquifers or surface water from mining operations can be expected to become significant once operations become established.

Groundwater plays a vital role in sustaining agriculture in Victoria, and hence our economy and lifestyle. Mining coal and gas – especially UCG – is a very water intensive process. With the prospect of an expanding mining sector, fossil fuels and agriculture can be expected to be in increasing conflict over limited water supplies in coming years. There is already substantial concerns about subsidence and over use of aquifers across Gippsland as a result of mining activity.

There is a fear of geo contamination – dangerous materials being brought to the surface in recovered water as a result of shale and gas fracking. These contaminants include heavy metals, naturally occurring radioactive materials, volatile and semi volatile organic compounds and high concentrations of salts.

The Otway Basin west of Melbourne is a key location for shale gas potential. There are risks specific to the local geology. The Otway Basin is considered "structurally complex, which may increase the potential for fluid flow between gas shales and other units including aquifers" - in other words we are "messing with nature".

The Otway Basin already has multiple users, ranging from conventional oil and gas, carbon capture and storage, groundwater (unconfined and confined), hot sedimentary aquifer (geothermal), and domestic water supply which will make management of any UCG drilling complex.

I believe I have said sufficient for this committee to recommend an outright permanent ban on UCG in Victoria which should of course extend to the whole of Australia.

Thanks for reading my submission.

I remain, Deni Collyer, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]