

From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
<cso@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 6 July 2015 9:05 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Ms Catheryn Thompson
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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As a resident of Boolarra (3870) Gippsland I would like to make a submission to the State Government inquiry into onshore unconventional gas extraction in Victoria. I have lived in the area for 28 years and have been actively involved in conservation & restoration projects in the district both for biodiversity and edible food production for over two decades. Fertile land, forested catchments and flowing, healthy water is critical to the beauty and ecological stability of this area and I do not want to see my community and the surrounding countryside negatively impacted by unconventional gas extraction. I firmly believe they will be if the gas industry is allowed to operate in the area.

Boolarra and the surrounding districts support agriculture, forestry and smaller scale farming such as fruit, vegetables and fish. Forestry & agricultural land clearing have already impacted on the ecological sustainability of the region however these industries are preferable to coal and coal seam gas mining. The land needs to be protected for biodiversity, food, tree and water production both now and more importantly, for the future. Water is Gold in a country short of it and we cannot under-estimate the risks of not been able to grow our own food in changing economic times.

Unconventional gas extraction has the potential to damage these forest and agricultural industries by contaminating the underground aquifers and water supply with toxic chemicals (both those used in the extraction process and those disturbed from their otherwise safe underground storage), by polluting the creeks and rivers with chemicals and the brine solution and by lowering the water table already negatively affected by off shore gas and oil extraction. In addition unconventional gas extraction will industrialise the landscape with well pads, storage pits, treatment plants, pipelines and roads as well as increasing volumes of heavy traffic on existing local roads. I am particularly concerned about the extensive network of pipelines that would be necessary to make the industry viable given that we live in an area of high fire and earthquake risk (Black Saturday fires in 2009 and a 5.3 earthquake in 2012).

Higher population densities and smaller farms compared to Queensland (where the industry is well established) would mean significantly higher numbers of people and farms would be negatively impacted by

unconventional gas extraction, along with impacts on forested areas of the Strzeleckis that are already under represented in permanent reserves.

I am concerned about property values, the rental market (and the possibility of displacing low income families), air and noise pollution, the loss of tourism, the reduced liveability and attractiveness of the area and the damage that could be done to the Gippsland “brand” which currently enjoys a reputation of being a producer of high quality foods.

Unconventional gas extraction poses a significant threat to the future of Boolarra and the surrounding districts. We should protect our biodiversity and water for generations to come and not compromise them for the short term financial gains of a few predominantly internationally owned mining companies. Victoria has enough off shore gas to supply the domestic market for decades and any damaging onshore gas industry would only supply the international market thereby raising the domestic price and increasing the risk of shortages.

I believe that the onshore gas extraction industry should be prevented from ever operating in and around Boolarra, throughout Gippsland and also the rest of Victoria. And I know I am not alone. Almost 90% of property owners in my community are against any new mining and more than 500 residents have signed a survey indicating they are against any gas fields. The industry has no social licence to operate in this area and should never be allowed to do so. I urge you to recommend a complete ban on the onshore extraction of gas in Victoria.

Sincerely

Catheryn Thompson



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File1:

File2:

File3: