

July 6th 2015

Thank you for the opportunity to present a submission to the parliamentary inquiry into onshore unconventional gas mining in Victoria.

Please think seriously about this question ...

“Would you want your family to live next to a gas well?”



Trucks 24 hours a day, smells of gas emissions, always in doubt about the safety of the air you breathe, your drinking water, the water you use on your vegetable garden.

Caring for your children when trucks drive past your gate containing concentrated chemicals known to cause cancer and birth deformities?

We've made the choice to live in close knit rural communities with clean air, clean water, food we can grow ourselves and the sense of being connected to the natural world.

We've built our lives here.

There is no social justice in forcing this toxic industry upon us.

You cannot prove its safety.

And we don't need the gas.

As politicians, you have been voted into office by the people, to represent the people's wishes, not those of industry. The gas industry will blind you with promises of prosperity and money and jobs. But at what cost?

How can you justify, in your heart, embracing a controversial industry which is intent on changing the landscape and nature of our beautiful and productive Victorian countryside. An industry that increasingly shows evidence of long term impacts on the environment and people's health. An industry that pumps tonnes of toxic chemicals into the earth that holds our precious aquifers.

No amount of regulation and safeguards can prevent system failures and flooding and negligence. Accidents will happen. Spills of toxic chemicals will occur. Any industry member who says otherwise is imagining a too perfect world.

All this risk and industrialization and fractured communities. For what?

- For royalties? Where is the social justice in rural populations shouldering the risk while whole populations benefit from revenue.
- For shareholder profit? Most of whom live overseas, and none of whom are risking their children's health, their farms, their peace of mind.
- For jobs? Look at the industry in Queensland and NSW. Jobs are short-term and outsourced.
- For gas that we don't need? Victoria has more than enough gas already to meet its needs. To dig up more for overseas markets is corporate greed.
- For an industry that contributes to global warming? At a time when we should be changing to renewables, leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

How can you contemplate leaving a toxic legacy to Victorians? You didn't enter politics to be remembered for forcing an unwelcome, unnecessary industry into pristine and productive farmland that Victorians care for deeply.

You may not fully appreciate the depth of passion we have about our land. Victorian land is fertile and precious. And those of us who live here will fight to keep it that way. This industry will always be controversial. There will be protests. There will be blockades. There will be people being forcibly removed from drilling sites. It will never be accepted.

For the future of our beautiful state, ban the unconventional gas industry.

Elizabeth Bashford
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