

Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

I would like to make a short submission to the State government's Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

I would like to make it clear that I do not support Unconventional Gas (UCG) drilling in Victoria which includes the region where I live.

Because there are inherent risks involved UCG drilling has a serious potential to compromise a number of environmental assets which strongly suggests that this industry should not be allowed to go ahead in Victoria.

I have lived in the Portland region in far southwest Victoria for over 50 years and have enjoyed the great natural assets that exist nearby including National Parks, Reserves and State Forest areas with abundant wildlife and great social amenity. The thought that these natural areas could potentially be compromised by what is essentially a short term invasive industry with a considerable long-term footprint is completely unacceptable to me.

I strongly believe in sustainable agriculture and tourism and do not believe that UCG drilling can actually co-exist with these enterprises in Victoria.

I have strong concerns about the geological nature of the Portland region with clear evidence of past seismic activity in the form of Mt Richmond, Cape Nelson, Cape Bridgewater, Cape Grant, Mt Eccles and Mt Clay amongst others. Given that this region's underground geological structures are still poorly understood I consider the thought of introducing UCG drilling to this landscape as being hard to comprehend.

I also have strong concerns about water usage by the UCG industry, less than a decade ago there was considerable debate about hardwood plantations having the potential to take up groundwater resources in the Portland region and the need for regulation. It is my understanding that the sheer volume of water used by the UCG industry would far surpass anything that hardwood plantations could possibly achieve, combining this with a potential to contaminate our precious aquifers does not at all represent an attractive package.

Lastly I also believe that considering more fossil fuel extraction when globally we are on a trajectory toward dangerous climate change is a deeply flawed approach when there are fantastic opportunities to obtain renewable synthetic gas via modern second generation bioenergy processes using regionally abundant waste biomass sources to generate electricity and fuels for the long term.

I urge you to recommend that Victoria ban all unconventional gas drilling permanently.

Doug Phillips

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