

From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
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Sent: Tuesday, 7 July 2015 9:21 AM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.
Attachments: 559b0d507df31-Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria - HP.docx

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Helen Phillips
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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See attached word document....easier to read. Please let me know if the Word copy was received. Thank you in advance.

Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

Please find below my submission to the State government's Inquiry into unconventional gas.

I am a mother of two young children and live in an area that unconventional gas drilling is planned. I am very concerned about UCG drilling will have on our environment and subsequently potentially my children's health and future health of our community and environment. I hope you will consider my submission as it is important that all Victorian's can have their say on such a broad scale industry that could potentially permanently ruin our landscape health and our consequently our own health and amenity.

I limit my comments to the terms of reference that seem most relevant to me.

I believe there should be an outright and permanent ban placed on all onshore unconventional gas drilling in Victoria.

I do not believe that this industry can co-exist safely with other land uses like farming, conservation, and tourism. This inquiry offers us an opportunity to halt this industry before it gets established. Based on the experience of farmers in other parts of the world, including here in Australia and in North America, Victoria is heavily reliant on agriculture and food processing.

Nature based tourism is also significant across much of the state where the UCG industry wants to get established, including our little patch where I operate a small eco-tourist cottage and am personally concerned activity in that area would directly impact on that income stream and the land value decline of

that property decline.

From what I have seen and read gas drilling will industrialise the landscape, and impact on rural land dwellers and people in adjacent areas. In the media recently on the ABC news there was a report of an elderly couple in England who lived over the road from UCG drilling operation and the elderly lady said their land was worthless and they could not sell and move as nobody would buy their property. Surely in this day and age the needs of community are still valued enough and enough moral integrity among those in power to not allow this type of injustice unfold before our eyes.

I believe there needs to be a considered review of energy needs. As I understand UCG is a fossil fuel that can only further imbed our reliance on coal and gas as energy sources. The UCG processes I understand does produce significant greenhouse gas emissions. In a proper review of energy needs alternative energy needs to have solid place with fossil fuels perhaps reserved for heavy transportation and thus removing the burden on the climate and the extraction of the “dregs” of fossil fuels such as UCG. The costs far outweigh any short term benefits and more vision and direction should be afforded to energy needs of a state, nation and globally. Our car industry is symptomatic of Australian apathy to grasp new vision. We should be making electric cars as they GM chose to do in the United States to save that industry. It could be a vibrant industry lessening the reliance on fossil fuels and by putting some money toward solar technology into the cars and alternative power to sustain them would only project us into a new era of less need for fossil fuels and processes such as CSG. There are some very efficient electric cars that the average mum and dad family could utilise if they were massed produced at an economical scale. Australia as far as CSG itself goes does not need to happen and a thorough review would recommend transition to other energy sources and importantly reserves of energy & minerals for the Australian population reserved. We are at risk of extracting reserves of energy/ minerals beyond that is sustainable and could eventually become like Nauru on a larger scale if we are not careful and strategic about our approach to how a country manages resources....they are finite. Our future generations need consideration in the quest for short term dollars.

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

(1) the prospectivity of Victoria’s geology for commercial sources of onshore unconventional gas; I think that UCG should NOT proceed on or offshore. The industry undermines too many other values of the state and it makes no sense to jeopardise our water quality and quantity, and other industries including a healthy agriculture sector is foolhardy. The quality of our soil and water is too precious for short term gain. It is also likely the industry can cause land subsidence. The National Water Commission has its concerns as well: Current projections indicate the Australian CSG industry could extract in the order of 7,500 gigalitres of co-produced water from groundwater systems over the next 25 years, equivalent to ~300 gigalitres per year. In comparison, the current total extraction from the Great Artesian Basin is approximately 540 gigalitres per year.

Potential impacts of CSG developments, particularly the cumulative effects of multiple projects, are not well understood. Potential risks to sustainable water management Extracting large volumes of low-quality water will impact on connected surface and groundwater systems, some of which may already be fully or overallocated, including the Great Artesian Basin and Murray-Darling Basin. Impacts on other water users and the environment may occur due to the dramatic depressurisation of the coal seam, including:

- changes in pressures of adjacent aquifers with consequential changes in water availability
- reductions in surface water flows in connected systems
- land subsidence over large areas, affecting surface water systems, ecosystems, irrigation and grazing lands.

The production of large volumes of treated waste water, if released to surface water systems, could alter natural flow patterns and have significant impacts on water quality, and river and wetland health. There is an associated risk that, if the water is overly treated, ‘clean water’ pollution of naturally turbid systems may occur. The practice of hydraulic fracturing, or fraccing, to increase gas output, has the potential to induce connection and cross-contamination between aquifers, with impacts on groundwater quality. The reinjection of treated waste water into other aquifers has the potential to change the beneficial use characteristics of those aquifers. http://www.nwc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/9723/Coal_Seam_Gas.pdf

I will address the next 2 terms of reference together:

- (2) the environmental, land productivity and public health risks, risk mitigations and residual risks of onshore unconventional gas activities;
- (3) the coexistence of onshore unconventional gas activities with existing land and water uses, including —
- (a) agricultural production and domestic and export market requirements;
 - (b) the legal rights of property owners and the impact on property values; and
 - (c) any implications for local and regional development, investment and jobs;

We should not allow onshore or offshore unconventional gas activities due to its likely impacts on agricultural production and hence both domestic and export economies.

Agriculture is a vital to the economy of Victoria. As of 2010-11, there are 307,000 people employed in Australian agriculture. The complete agricultural supply chain, including the affiliated food and fibre industries, provide over 1.6 million jobs to the Australian economy. The agricultural sector, at farm-gate, contributes 3 percent to Australia's total gross domestic product (GDP). The gross value of Australian farm production in 2010-11 was \$48.7 billion.. Australia's farm exports earned the country \$32.5 billion in 2010-11, up from \$32.1 billion in 2008-09, while the wider agriculture, fisheries and forestry sectors earn the country \$36.2 billion in exports(<http://www.nff.org.au/farm-facts.html>).... Agriculture needs to be protected from UCG so we can continue to have a healthy productive agricultural sector. Farmland must be protected from UCG.

Water allocation and use needs of UCG are concerning. How does the UCG comply with the objectives of the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Water Initiative?The NWI represents a shared commitment by governments to increase the efficiency of Australia's water use, leading to greater certainty for investment and productivity, for rural and urban communities, and for the environment. Under the NWI, governments have made commitments to:

- prepare water plans with provision for the environment
- deal with over-allocated or stressed water systems
- introduce registers of water rights and standards for water accounting
- expand the trade in water
- improve pricing for water storage and delivery
- meet and manage urban water demands.(<http://www.nationalwatermarket.gov.au/rules-restrictions/national-rules.html>)

The Water Act 1989 sect 1 purposes states(d) to make sure that water resources are conserved and properly managed for sustainable use for the benefit of present and future Victorians. UCG from my understanding has longterm impacts on consumption and contamination of water that Victorians present and future need and therefore should not be able to proceed. Other purposes of The Water Act apply including (c) to promote the orderly, equitable and efficient use of water resources; From my understanding the high water consumption needs of UCG would negatively disadvantage agriculture and potentially other potable water needs. Therefore again UCG should not be allowed to proceed on these grounds. Another purpose of The Water Act is also pertinent being (j) to provide formal means for the protection and enhancement of the environmental qualities of waterways and their in-stream uses; - our wildlife and flora need quality water to be sustained and UCG I believe threaten this and contravenes this part of the Water Act. (source http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/wa198983/s1.html)

Australia faces significant environmental and economic impacts from climate change across a number of sectors, including water security, agriculture, coastal communities, and infrastructure (<http://www.environment.gov.au/climate-change/climate-science/impacts>). We need to protect water as it is a precious resource we cannot take for granted or advantage of. UCG uses too much water and contaminates water and therefore should not be allowed to proceed. Water should be protected and secured for agriculture, communities and environment.

Quality of ground water needs to be protected. 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.

- (4) the ability of potential onshore unconventional gas resources contributing to the State's overall energy sources including —

- (a) an ability to provide a competitive source of energy and non energy inputs for Victorian industries;
- (b) an affordable energy source for domestic consumers; and
- (c) carbon dioxide emissions from these sources;

Future energy needs could be better sourced from frugal use of fossil fuels (not accessing UCG) and transition to alternative sources of energy. The IPCC in their Climate Change 2014 Synthesis Report Summary for Policymakers state: Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the pre-industrial era, driven largely by economic and population growth, and are now higher than ever. This has led to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide that are unprecedented in at least the last 800,000 years. Their effects, together with those of other anthropogenic drivers, have been detected throughout the climate system and are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century. (https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/syr/AR5_SYR_FINAL_SPM.pdf). We need to transition to other energy sources and not include UCG in the mix as it only adds to issues we have with our atmosphere. It is time to move forward to a new era that relies on sustainable energy sources no matter how reluctant some vested interests are.

- (5) the resource knowledge requirements and policy and regulatory safeguards that would be necessary to enable exploration and development of onshore unconventional gas resources, including —
 - (a) further scientific work to inform the effective regulation of an onshore unconventional gas industry, including the role of industry and government, particularly in relation to rigorous monitoring and enforcement, and the effectiveness of impact mitigation responses; and
 - (b) performance standards for managing environmental and health risks, including water quality, air quality, chemical use, waste disposal, land contamination and geotechnical stability;

I believe the best way to regulate this industry is to ban it, it has had negative effects in Australia and other parts of the world. This is the simplest policy response. Many other jurisdictions have chosen to place an outright ban on UCG and/or the process of fracking, our area does not want it. Some other examples include:

Outright Fracking Bans

USA

- New York – December 2014 – this was implemented on the basis of health risks after expert investigation and the publication of a New York State Department of Health Report.

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/18/nyregion/cuomo-to-ban-fracking-in-new-york-state-citing-health-risks.html?_r=0

https://www.health.ny.gov/press/reports/docs/high_volume_hydraulic_fracturing.pdf

- Secaucus, New Jersey – 26th June, 2012 - The mayor and Town Council banned fracking and fracking waste water “in a resolution that states that the drilling process causes environmental hazards.”

[http://hudsonreporter.com/view/full_story/19312259/article-Secaucus-bans-](http://hudsonreporter.com/view/full_story/19312259/article-Secaucus-bans-%E2%80%98fracking%E2%80%99-Local-officials-also-call-for-statewide-and-national-ban-?instance=secondary_stories_left_column)

[-Local-officials-also-call-for-statewide-and-national-ban-?instance=secondary_stories_left_column](http://hudsonreporter.com/view/full_story/19312259/article-Secaucus-bans-%E2%80%98fracking%E2%80%99-Local-officials-also-call-for-statewide-and-national-ban-?instance=secondary_stories_left_column)

- Vermont – 17th May 2012 – Vermont was the first US state to ban fracking. The Governor stated that protection of drinking water is more important than increased access to natural gas.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/17/vermont-fracking-ban-first_n_1522098.html

UK

- Wales - from February 2015 – “effectively making it impossible for shale gas developments to receive planning permits in Wales.” <https://uk.finance.yahoo.com/news/wales-votes-against-shale-gas-190742367.html>

- Northern Ireland – July 2014 – the environment minister promised that there will be no fracking in Northern Ireland unless it can be proved “safe beyond doubt”.

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/business/news/fracking-drilling-will-not-be-allowed-in-northern-ireland-unless-its-proven-safe-warns-environment-minister-mark-h-durkan-30469238.html>

Europe

- France -30th June 2011 - Ban on hydraulic fracturing was voted in by parliament. The International Energy Agency claims that France has more plentiful reserves of shale gas than most of Europe, but France’s Constitutional council threw out a 2013 challenge to the law by US based Schuepbach Energy

<http://www.dw.de/french-court-rejects-challenge-to-anti-fracking-legislation/a-17151744>

Current President François Hollande has promised the ban will be maintained for his five-year term.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/business-23311963>

- Luxembourg – 13th November 2012 – the Luxembourg parliament voted against a motion to extract underground shale gas based on environmental concerns. <http://www.wort.lu/en/luxembourg/no-fracking-of-shale-gas-in-luxembourg-50a37ff8e4b0e83edf95f923>

- Bulgaria – 18th January 2012 - Bulgaria banned exploratory drilling for shale gas. On 14th June 2012 Bulgaria imposed an absolute ban on fracking and revoked Chevron’s shale gas permit.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/14/bulgaria-bans-shale-gas-exploration>

- Spain – 30th January, 2014 – fracking was banned in Catalonia as part of the urban planning law.

http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2014/02/01/catalunya/1391210321_238105.html

- Canton of Fribourg, Switzerland – April 2011. Decision not to renew exploration licence of Schuepbach Energy, and all other licences suspended “for an undetermined period.”

<http://coalseamgasnews.org/news/world/switzerland-joins-worldwide-ban-on-gas-fracking/>

- Austria – March 2014 - a fracking ban was enshrined in the Vorarlberg State Constitution.

<http://www.vol.at/fracking-verbot-wird-in-vorarlberger-landesverfassung-verankert/3907751>

- Italy – September 2014 – a ban introduced as part of the Law of Stability 2014 in order to protect groundwater and soil and promote “efficient use of national water resources.”

<http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/09/04/fracking-commissione-ambiente-da-vietare-il-ministero-mai-autorizzato/1110626/>

(6) relevant domestic and international reviews and inquiries covering the management of risks for similar industries including, but not limited to, the Victorian Auditor-General Office’s report Unconventional Gas: Managing Risks and Impacts (contingent upon this report being presented to Parliament) and other reports generated by the Victorian community and stakeholder engagement programs.

Please also see section 5 above. Recently I attended a forum in our community and a worker from the industry spoke. It gave me more resolve to my thinking that the industry needs to be banned. Not only do they have no respect for the land and water but also the people they employ; it was disheartening to hear about healthy young people being driven to despair needing to leave their job (the rate mentioned was 30% staff turnover) and many of them needing mental health services some even committing suicide due to the “machine” like expectations of individuals. The casualties of this industry are huge and not worth it. Please ban the industry.

Hopefully I have conveyed my concerns about UCG appropriately and you will consider it a valid submission however, if I need to add anything or not addressed anything that I need to please let me know so I can add to the document.

I wish you all the best in reading all the submissions and hope the inquiry can prevent UCG operations so all the people and landscape of Victoria can be protected from this controversial industry.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Phillips

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File1: [559b0d507df31-Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria - HP.docx](#)

File2:

File3: