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From: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV eSubmission Form
<cso@parliament.vic.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 9 July 2015 8:32 PM
To: EPC
Subject: New Submission to Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria.

Ms Elizabeth Fenton
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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee
Inquiry into Unconventional Gas POV

Submission from
Elizabeth Fenton
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Via the Legislative Council's Environment and Planning Committee I urge the Victorian Government to extend the moratorium on exploration and the extraction of onshore gas in Victoria until at least 2030 to allow further observations to be made, information to be collected and for further research to be undertaken. I urge them to recognise the increasing evidence of negative impacts of unconventional onshore gas mining exploration and extraction to the environment, surface and underground water, agriculture and the health of individuals and communities in Australia and other countries. I also urge them to recognise that some problems to human and environmental health caused by these practices may not yet have become evident.

I make this submission as a farm tree nursery operator and a farmer for many decades in south west Victoria and also as a retired nurse. My opinions are influenced by my experiences and observations living, working and volunteering in metropolitan, urban and rural communities over almost half a century of adult life. Some of these influencing factors are recorded below.

Over the years I have observed that many practices, materials, drugs and chemicals used in health care, agriculture, industry and lifestyle which were acceptable, legal, recommended and at times commonly used

have proven to be unacceptable and sometimes dangerous with devastating, long term and very costly private and public consequences.

I have cared for people who have suffered and died as a result of exposure to materials once commonly used but are now recognised as toxic. Some of this exposure occurred after it was known that such exposure was very likely to have adverse outcomes. Likewise I have supported people who have endured severe lifelong disabilities as the results of what at the time were considered to be beneficial legal drugs taken by their mothers during pregnancy.

I have spent years assisting farmers rehabilitate land that has deteriorated or become degraded and unproductive as a result of implementing what were considered to be good practices in past years. These practises sometimes resulted in short term financial gain but the ongoing financial costs to governments, communities, individuals and the environment has often far outweighed the initial benefits.

I have worked with many individuals, groups and companies who are careful and considered and work within safe guidelines but I have also had contact with others who are less careful and at times seemingly wilfully destructive knowing that the responsible government agencies often do not have the staff or commitment to monitor, prosecute or ensure damage is repaired despite the existence of seemingly adequate protective laws. The ongoing reduction of regionally based, suitably skilled government agency staff will in my mind make any plans to monitor, manage and ensure the safe and legal operation of mine sites difficult if not impossible to achieve.

I believe we should learn from mistakes made in the past, act with extreme caution and the Government should therefore delay allowing any Unconventional Gas exploration or extraction to commence or continue.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Fenton

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File1:

File2:

File3: