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From: Sam Washington [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 9 July 2015 9:10 PM
To: EPC
Subject: State Inquiry into Unconventional Gas

My name is Samuel Washington, I'm a third year student studying Environmental Management, and prior to that worked a number of years in the aged care sector in building management in Camberwell, Victoria. I also have many connections to farmland on the outskirts of Melbourne and it is through those connection that I am concerned at the recent interest in unconventional gas exploration within Victoria and Australia.

Along with my studies, I have done much research into the sector which has promised to deliver cost effective gas supply to the state. Firstly I would like to point out the ability of this sector to be "cost effective". While it is widely known that many sectors rely upon subsidies and tax breaks from the government, this industry is not exempt. There are also special conditions that for some reason makes them exempt from common practices and laws regarding access to properties. This exploration and drilling relies upon the generosity of the government to pass these along to the industry.

The economic benefits have been shown to be relatively short term (as most political subjects appear to be), while the cost to landowners is significant when taking into account the effect of drilling and the loss of productivity on their land, even taking into account rental payments. I believe the choice should be up to landholders, certainly for the site of drilling, but this should not ignore the surrounding properties as the drilling not only extends under their properties, but could also have impacts from leaks or accidents from the initial drilling site.

Reducing these impacts upon properties is paramount to this discussion. As is usual, the most effective measure is to not even drill. While industry standards have dramatically improved over the years due to studies of impacts, there are still significant risks associated with the type of unconventional gas extraction that will never be 100% effective.

As Victoria attempts to head into a more modern economy, the future for gas, oil and coal is limited. Already we have seen significant movement away from fossil fuels right around the world, and even on the State level, Australia is managing a little investment in "unconventional free energy", aka, solar, wind and tide. Through continued investment in gas and other fossil fuel products is currently seen as a poor decision environmentally, but also economically as more and more models show the way forward is through renewable electrical generation and storage technologies. In most domestic and commercial cases, gas is easily replaced by electrical equivalents, and it is only a matter of time before most other industries relying upon gas as part of production will develop an alternative means of production.

Kind Regards,
Samuel Washington

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