

From: Hannah Capon [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 July 2015 9:05 AM
To: EPC
Subject: Inquiry into Unconventional Gas exploration in Victoria

To whom it may concern,

My name is Hannah Capon. I am 24 years old, currently living in Melbourne researching dementia during work hours and growing with concern for our government, future populations and environment in my spare time. I grew up between The Otways and the Great Ocean Road, an area which flourishes from the land through agricultural uses, tourism, farming and beauty. I have also been brought up to value all things living before anything else. Such basic values for other human beings, our urban and rural spaces and the environment which we share the world, are completely forgotten by those choosing to embark on unconventional gas exploration in Victoria, Australia, and throughout the world. I am underwhelmed that our current political leaders do not show the same values, choosing money and corporate greed over protecting our land, our basic human rights and respecting the future generations who will inherit such spaces.

In my final hope, I would like to make a submission to the State government's Inquiry into unconventional gas.

I believe there is a compelling case to place an outright and permanent ban on all onshore unconventional gas drilling in Victoria. Based on the experience in other parts of the world where the industry is more advanced, including here in Australia and in North America, I do not believe that this industry can co-exist safely with other land uses like farming, conservation, and tourism.

Victoria is a densely populated state, heavily reliant on agriculture and associated food processing. Nature based tourism is also significant across much of the state where the UCG industry is exploring to be established. Gas drilling will industrialize the landscape, and impact on rural land dwellers and people in adjacent areas. It is more than likely to have significant public health impacts, given the many case studies from around the globe where this has impacted the quality of water. It is well known that UCG is a fossil fuel that will further entrench our current reliance on coal and gas as energy sources. Not only is it energy intensive to produce, it will produce significant greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging UCG drilling will further be taking a step in the wrong direction for what is in the best interest of our global population. Furthermore, the benefits associated with any royalties that are likely to be delivered as a result of drilling need to be carefully considered against possible negative economic impacts. The costs are likely to far outweigh any short-term benefits.

With the power that you hold over legislation, I urge you to recommend that Victoria ban all unconventional, UCG drilling permanently. Responsible decision-making where risk is involved and science is uncertain requires the application of the precautionary principle. It is clear that many problems with the industry may take years, and potentially decades, to be fully understood. It would be reckless to unleash this industry on our state with all the evidence that is emerging about contamination events with direct effects on the health of human beings and the environment associated with UCG drilling.

Given the outright Fracking bans currently in existence throughout the world, the committee should not have must difficulty in understanding the absurdity of considering UCG exploration in Victoria, let alone Australia (in case the committee is unaware, please see the links below).

I thank you for taking the time to consider my submission,

Kind regards,

Hannah Capon

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For reference: Bans recently placed on fracking and unconventional gas exploration throughout the world.

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

San Benito County, California – April 2014

http://www.mercurynews.com/science/ci_26866639/san-benito-countys-measure-j-voters-backing-anti

Mendocino County, California – 4th November 2014 –

This ban on fracking was implemented as part of a community Bill of Rights to “natural and chemical free communities and ecosystems, a clean environment, and self-government by the people, without manipulation and overwhelming influence from corporations.” It imposes considerable penalties for breaches.

http://ballotpedia.org/Mendocino_County_Community_Bill_of_Rights_Fracking_and_Water_Use_Initiative,_Measure_S_%28November_2014%29

Santa Cruz County, California – May 2014

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/05/21/california-fracking-idUSL1N00700J20140521>

Highland Park, New Jersey - Sep 17 2013

An ordinance to ban fracking was passed by Highland Park Borough Council.

http://www.nj.com/middlesex/index.ssf/2013/09/highland_park_becomes_first_town_in_nj_to_ban_fracking.html

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-%E2%80%98fracking%E2%80%99-Local-officials-also-call-for-statewide-and-national-ban-?instance=secondary_stories_left_column

Denton, Texas – 4th November 2014

By citizen ballot – permanently prohibits fracking within the city limits.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/news/politics/headlines/20141105-denton-fracking-ban-passed-in-landslide1.ece>

Hawaii – October 2013

Unanimous County council bill banned hydraulic fracturing.

<http://hawaiitribune-herald.com/sections/news/local-news/council-oks-ban-fracking.html>

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

United Kingdom

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

Fracking was also banned in Cantabria, followed by La Rioja and Navarra later that year.

http://sociedad.elpais.com/sociedad/2013/04/08/actualidad/1365443283_986703.html

"The Rioja Government has implemented the principles of preventive action and caution advocating the European Union (EU) on environmental protection."

<http://www.larioja.com/20130531/local/region/gobierno-rioja-prohibe-usar-201305311150.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/>

New Zealand

Christchurch/Aotearoa – April 2012

A unanimous vote by Christchurch City Council to declare the city a frack-free zone; citing impact on the local environment, water supply and earthquakes.

<http://archived.ccc.govt.nz/council/proceedings/2012/april/cnclcover12th/ConfirmedMinutesCouncil12April2012.pdf>

Kaikoura – April, 2012

The Kaikoura District Council declared itself a frack-free zone.