

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

I submit that the Committee should recommend a permanent ban on coal seam gas search and drilling for the following reasons.

Coal seam gas carries massive risks for the environment and health, most particularly and most concerningly our water supply. That alone justifies a moratorium. Our forefathers gave Melbourne an excellent protected water supply and it is our duty to preserve it. In rural Victoria, water supply varies, but with the likelihood of drought in the future anything that threatens rural water supplies should be avoided.

Coal seam gas threatens our agricultural industries. Farmers deserve certainty and consumers deserve the chance to eat locally grown produce. We already have enough problems with the loss of agricultural land to urban encroachment and mining.

More generally, coal seam gas threatens our environment, land productivity, our communities and public health, and the risks are far too great to be mitigated or outweighed by any benefits.

That is why Victorian communities don't want unconventional gas. At least 30 communities have already declared themselves gasfield-free, and the number continues to grow. The Government needs to respect the wishes of Victorian communities.

Other jurisdictions like New York City and Ohio have already instituted permanent bans on coal seam gas, and Victoria should follow suit, as this is what the community wants.

Charles Sowerwine

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