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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, 8 July 2015 12:12 PM
To: EPC
Subject: Submission to the Environment & Planning Committee Inquiry into Unconventional Gas in Victoria

To the Environment and Planning Committee,

I am proud of the long tradition of environmental awareness and responsibility that Victorians have supported, and governments on both sides have led - notably Rupert Hamer and John Cain, as well as the popular support for our environment through many active groups in Victoria such as Environment Victoria and the Australian Conservation Foundation. It's deeply disappointing to me that the bipartisan interest in environmental protection has been replaced in recent governments by disdain on the coalition side for environment as a critical issue for our future. The election of a Labor state government and shift towards green politics across the left is to me a clear sign that a large sector of our community mistrusts the underlying intentions of right-wing politicians and established energy industry generally. Taking responsibility for the best interests of the people and environment of Victoria in the long-term is what I demand, but it's in the hands of parliament to act.< br />

Fracking is money politics at the expense of local communities and future generations. It's dirty, destructive and insidious. We should rule it out absolutely and permanently.

- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to supply energy. Unconventional gas is not a renewable source of energy - it is polluting, contributes to climate change, and is not required as a fuel to transition between fossil fuels and renewables. We can make a planned transition to 100% renewables in Victoria without the need for gas as a 'bridging' fuel, but we need to start investing in real renewables like solar and wind power now.
- We don't need an unconventional gas industry in Victoria to provide employment. Supporting and growing our renewables industry will provide more jobs that are future-proofed and lead to greater long-term employment growth in Victoria. Growth in our renewables industry provides a valuable opportunity for re-skilling and redeploying workers who need help to transition from traditional energy production roles – there are now more people employed installing solar panels in Victoria than in coal generation.
- 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.
- Coal seam gas carries massive and proven risks for the environment and health. It threatens our environment, land productivity, agricultural industries, our water supply, our communities and public health, and the risks are far too great to be mitigated or outweighed by any benefits.
- 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.

Michael Wauchope

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