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Mr Keir Delaney  
Parliament House,  
Melbourne  
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To Environment and Planning Committee

**Opposition to Fracking and Coal Seam Gas Production at any location in Victoria..**

My name is Joan Lindros, I am writing to express opposition to the possibility of the fracking industry being permitted at all in Victoria. I am a long time environmentalist in NGOs in Victoria and also in semi-government organizations. I am a professional worker in the Bellarine area, and a landowner of vegetated land in the Otway area, some of which is protected by a Trust for Nature Covenant.

The existing exploration leases cover significant water supply regions, farmland, landscape and tourism areas with Ramsar and protected wetlands on the Bellarine Peninsula. Other leases cover large areas of the Otway farming and forest land, national parks and important vegetated areas, including Geelong's water catchments and aquifer borefields.

I believe that the issues, experiences and court cases which have arisen in Queensland and NSW sound a clear warning to the Victorian Government and all water and civic management authorities, landowners, farmers and residents in this state.

**There are a number of issues to be considered which indicate that the industry is unsustainable, damaging to water supplies, farming area and community values**

Potential damage which is caused by the use of rural, conservation or open space land for fracking purposes will be irreversible. There will be no going back to the original condition of the land when the gas is exhausted. If groundwater becomes polluted with fracking chemicals there is no way of restoring it for potable use. Furthermore there is no safe storage or disposal for polluted water, including dams and or water courses.

**Danger to the Total Water Supply in this region**

Value of the water asset in the regions of Geelong Council, Borough of Queenscliffe, Otway Colac Shire, Surf Coast Shire and Golden Plains is immense as these areas are nearly totally dependent on water from the aquifers. The industry of fracking or mining for coal seam gas presents the potential for long- term problems to the whole region of contamination of the water supplies and excessive use of the resource which would be disastrous in this expanding region. The need for hazardous chemicals to be injected into the aquifer or ground water is totally unacceptable with the possibility of their retention in and pollution of the ground water. There is no formula for disposing of the waste

water which is returned to the surface after fracking with retention in dams or run off into creeks being unsafe and unacceptable. I have seen no suggestions for a safe method of disposal of contaminated water. Contamination has occurred in other areas where fracking has been or is underway. This region is becoming a centre for major vegetable growing requiring vast amounts of water.

I believe that for any government or jurisdiction to permit fracking for on-shore gas exploration or production in this region would be irresponsible in the extreme due to the very real threat to the total water supply.

**Aquifer water is a finite resource, only replenished by natural rain. There is no alternative solution to shortages of, or poisoned water. It is therefore essential that fracking or mining for gas of any description is not permitted, ever, in this region or within Victoria..**

#### Terms of Reference

1. It is pointed out that the Torquay Fault exists in the area of the Wurdi Boluc Reservoir. There cannot be a complete knowledge regarding the interchange of surface water and the aquifers in any part of this region, including in the river catchments.. Interchange of water would also cause the interchange of pollutants with a high risk to Geelong and this whole district's water supply.
2. The Environment, Land Productivity and Health Risks and mitigation.. The environment will by the nature of the industry be compromised and damaged.

#### **Hazards which may result from the fracking industry include –**

- Excessive use of water in the fracking process with the potential for a shortage of potable water for Geelong and district. This region is dependent on water extracted from borefields situated at Anglesea and the Eastern Otways.
- Impossibility for storing and managing the 'waste water' from the process of fracking. This is highly polluted with chemicals and cannot be returned to rivers or streams or placed in storage dams. No solution to this problem has been achieved.
- The potential for groundwater to become polluted from the introduction of water laced with chemicals used to achieve the fracturing of the rock areas.
- The potential for methane to be released into the atmosphere is undesirable and adds to the Greenhouse effect.
- Loss of agricultural land for food production or natural areas and public spaces for recreation and conservation. Food production in areas close to major population areas will be more important in the future as oil becomes more costly and in shorter supply.
- Disturbance in local areas with damage to local roads and noise pollution from drilling and transport.
- Each drill site requires an area the size of a football field which will be disturbed or covered with a hard surface. Farm paddocks will be crossed with tracks and

- roads for the trucks to move between the drillings causing further destruction. to agricultural resources and infrastructure..
- The fact that this industry is 'once only' and the land used for farming and often cared for by generations of farmers will be severely degraded and useless for food production in the future. Any opportunity for food to be produced in local regions should not be compromised.
- 3 There can be no co-existence without a huge loss to open space and farming enterprises. Who could expect investment in farmland enterprises to be maintained if there is real or potential fracking risk
  - 4 It is a fallacy to state that Victoria needs coal seam gas for its energy needs. What Victoria needs is an increased support and investment in alternative energy which we have vast opportunities to establish. Also why would we destroy productive or recreational land for an export and finite industry. When the gas is gone, what is left apart from farmland compromised from pollution, gas wells, roads on properties and fragmentation of land and farming communities.
  - 5 Natural justice would indicate that clean air, water and access to privately owned agricultural land and public open space is a right. The legislation which allows an industry the absolute right to whatever is underneath a landowners topsoil without the permission of the owner, appears to have been suitable for the 1800's but certainly not appropriate in the 2000's. Many therefore urge that the Victorian Government strongly and totally opposes fracking in general in Victoria. It must be seen as a one-off land use, with some immediate returns to the companies involved and a long term disaster to our land, and therefore unacceptable to this and future generations.
  - 6 Scientific work and monitoring of an industry after the damage is done is too late, eg the use of asbestos (supposedly OK) but a total disaster. Performance standards in other states have not been satisfactory or safe. What is different in Victoria? When performance standards are not adhered to irreparable damage to the environment and farming enterprises will have occurred and probably be irreparable.

The belief that risks can be managed is of concern as there appears no way of managing the destruction of water, land and personal assets of the farming, tourism, community and the general wellbeing of the Victorian countryside.

GEC urges that Government joins with the City of Oreater Geelong Council, the Surf Coast Council and all other regional councils, landcare and environmental groups to extend the moratorium in perpetuity and protect Victoria from this damaging and polluting industry. There may be some supposed short term gains for the mining companies and some jobs in the fracking industry, but the long term detrimental effects on the Victorian farming areas and open spaces, roads and people's lives will be permanent.

Joan Lindros.

I wish to be heard at any enquiry

