

Submission for Parliamentary enquiry into unconventional gas mining

SUBMISSION CONTENT-

As a land owner and resident in the small rural community of Paraparap on the surf coast of Victoria, I have many concerns regarding the possibility of unconventional gas mining being allowed not only in our region, but also in the entire state of Victoria.

We moved to this idyllic place four years ago with the intention of living here for life, and ultimately raising a family in a beautiful rural location and community.

The thought that unconventional gas mining may potentially be allowed to proceed in this state and our region, and destroy this future we have worked so hard for, is devastating.

The role of our elected members of parliament is to represent the community, and not put corporate financial gains for few ahead of the health, security and quality of life of the very people who elected them.

Below are just a few of my concerns on this issue –

Health implications –

There are still so many unknowns regarding the long term health effects of unconventional gas mining, that surely it would not be wise to allow it to proceed until there was a firm evidence base confirming its safety?

The release of volatile gases from the mining process will affect air quality, and could be a factor in causing or compounding respiratory illness and symptoms in those residents living in close proximity to mines.

The potential contamination of ground water with toxic chemicals from the mining process will have devastating effects not only on water quality and safety, but also on the pastures, crops and stock that are produced on those fertile farmlands where the mining licences are held.

The psychological and mental health of residents in affected communities must be considered. How would you feel living and raising your family adjacent to a well? Would you be confident that you were providing the best start to life for your children? Would these concerns not cause considerable stress and anxiety? I know of many residents in our local community whom are already dealing with considerable stress and anxiety simply as this matter is being considered! Until CSG mining is banned in our state, many of us are living with a constant level of stress and fear regarding this.

Property Values –

Most certainly if unconventional gas mining was allowed to proceed in the state, property values of all in the associated areas would be significantly affected, and especially those in close proximity to wells. This could very easily leave land owners with mortgages far greater than their property's reduced value, and what would the re-sale potential be? But more importantly the value of our rural properties is so much more than any dollar amount..

Water Supply –

The process of unconventional gas mining requires large quantities of water in order to be able to extract gas. In the driest continent on earth, with large parts of the country in prolonged drought, is it really wise to be wasting such huge volumes of this precious resource in this mining process?

Local Environment and community –

Many individuals in Victoria are employed in the agriculture and tourism industries. The negative financial impact to these industries would be huge if unconventional gas mining were allowed to proceed, and the subsequent impact on jobs and investment, and effects on the community would be devastating. Is it really worth chasing the short term financial gains and short term increase in employment figures to the long term detriment of so many in these industries?

The regional areas of our state attract so many as both residents and visitors due to the pristine natural environments and scenery. To have our beautiful, productive pastoral and park land blighted by unconventional gas wells would be such a short sighted development and would tarnish our state forever more. Shouldn't we instead be looking to increase investment and energy production from renewable sources?

I implore the committee members to very carefully consider the submissions from community members. We as a community have declared that 'NO' we do not want unconventional gas mining to proceed in our region, and state wide. A permanent ban on unconventional gas mining in the state of Victoria is the far-sighted leadership we seek from our elected members.

We are the voters, if our voices are not heard in this forum, they will be heard through our votes.

Sincerely,

Erin Callahan

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