

Dear Mr Davis,

Thank you again for the opportunity to present to the Standing Committee on 1 September 2015. I now provide a response to the following matter taken on notice:

Does the New South Wales Chief Scientist's review touch closely enough on some of the relevant health matters?

My response is, no. The Chief Health Scientist and Engineer's independent review of Coal Seam Gas Activities in NSW does not sufficiently cover the points I have raised in my presentation. While it is an important report, it does not provide detailed discussion of the hazards associated with onshore unconventional gas activities and potential health outcomes of exposure to these hazards.

Further, the report relates to coal seam gas activities in NSW only, that is the extraction of natural gas from black coal deposits which I am informed we have limited resources of here in Victoria. As described in the Whole of Government Submission, we have potential natural gas resources associated with brown coal, as well as shale gas and tight gas potential in Victoria. Studies conducted in the US and elsewhere in the world which have a focus on the potential health impacts from shale gas activities may have greater relevance to the Victorian situation. To this end I again draw your attention again to the references I raised in my presentation:

US EPA (2015) Assessment of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing for oil and gas on drinking water resources.

New York State Department of Health (2014) A public health review of high volume hydraulic fracturing for shale gas development.

Werner et al. (2015) Environmental health impacts of unconventional natural gas development: A review of the current strength of evidence. Science of the Total Environment. 505: 1127-1141.

Thank you,

Michael

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