

Dee Kabel  
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Deedre Kabel

1st August 2011

Dear State and Federal Ministers,

I am horrified to learn of the extensive plans for coal seam gas and shale gas exploration in Australia. I have learned there are serious risks to human health and the environment associated with coal seam gas mining (CSG) and hydraulic fracturing. "Fracking" is the practice of using high pressure pumps to inject a mixture of sand, water and, a mystery cocktail of toxic chemicals into gas wells to release unconventional gas.

In fact, according to the National Toxics Network, only two of the 23 most commonly used chemicals used in this fracking process have even been assessed by the National Regulator.

In America, some of the chemicals used in these operations are suspected to be cancer causing agents. There have been reports of serious health and environmental damage from these mining practices. In Demick, Pennsylvania, some people living next to these drilling operations have so much gas and chemical pollutants in their tap water they can literally light it on fire!

Because of these kinds of problems, England, France and South Africa have already banned this type of exploration. Right now we still have the opportunity to avoid the disastrous environmental mistakes made by other countries.

Here is a frightening fact. Did you know that if a gas company thinks there is gas under your land, you don't have any legal right to stop them entering your land to explore it and, if you try to stop them, they can take you to land court? And, when they finally leave your land, which could be twenty years from now, your property may be a toxic wasteland?

Are you aware that gas leases in Queensland and New South Wales already cover an area ten times the size of Tasmania?

We have the largest pure water source in the world. In fact, the Great Artesian Basin covers a vast area of our country's land mass (about one quarter in total), and Australia is one of the few countries where it is safe to drink from your tap at home. How can we even consider putting one of our countries greatest natural resources, our fresh water supply, at risk?

After talking with my friends and family, I realize there is lack of information and very few answers to many important questions. The gas(Energy) companies plans for exploration on private property throughout Australia is virtually unknown by private property owners. It was a surprise to me. The public's awareness as to what is happening, and the potential consequences to our health and our land shows that it's time for some serious inquiries.

On behalf of my family and friends and my fellow Australians, I would like answers to the following questions:

- What studies have been done to prove beyond any shadow of doubt that coal seam gas mining does not damage and pollute the water table?
- What chemicals are being used in CSG exploration and mining?
- Why are mining companies exempt from revealing the chemicals used in fracking?

- If no extensive studies on the effects of these chemicals have been conducted, then why are they already in use?
- Has the government considered that we may be sacrificing a sustainable source of food and water for a short term financial gain?
- In our land of abundant sunshine surrounded by ocean, have we thoroughly explored alternative non-toxic energy sources?

In addition, I am so alarmed to hear that dredging is taking place in our precious Great Barrier Reef at Curtis Island and around the Queensland port of Gladstone, which could have a direct negative impact on the marine ecology of the Reef. In fact, several dugongs and turtles have already been washed up on the beaches in the area.

Until these questions are answered, I respectfully request a moratorium on the coal seam gas exploration and mining in Australia until all health, social and environmental risks have been fully explored. We must have answers and regulations for what could be a very serious issue to the health and wellbeing of ALL Australians.

Stop coal seam gas mining and fracking until we know what harm these chemicals will do to our water, our soil, the air we breathe, our animals, our trees, our rivers, and our food chain for generations to come.

1. An immediate moratorium on approvals of coal mining and coal seam (and other unconventional) gas mining projects (including exploration, production, extensions of existing projects, etc.) until both the long and short-term physical, social, economic and environmental impacts of these industries has been fully assessed.
2. The establishment of a suitably empowered, fully independent inquiry at the national level (e.g. Royal Commission) to undertake this assessment, to advise on the reparation of damage done by these industries, to advise on the future role of these industries in the economy and to recommend legislative changes to remove the adverse impacts and unacceptable risks associated with these industries.
3. To limit the impact of existing licenses/agreements by the immediate establishment of an independent authority to monitor and ensure compliance by companies that are engaged in fossil fuel extraction (notably coal and CSG mining) with the conditions of their licenses/agreements at all stages of implementation, to enforce these agreements and ensure that appropriate, available penalties are applied, including reparation of damage, full compensation to those damaged and the cancellation of licenses for repeat or severe breaches (definitions to be established).
4. The withdrawal of all levels of government from financial investment in the fossil fuel extraction industry in all forms: direct participation (e.g., ownership, joint ventures, etc.), tax incentives/breaks, subsidies, etc. Government financial involvement raises a conflict of interest with government's role in ensuring the wellbeing of all its citizens.

Sincerely Outraged,

Deedre Kabel

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