

SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE INVESTIGATING COAL SEAM GAS EXPLORATION AND MINING IN AUSTRALIA November 19th 2011

Having seen the documentary "Gasland," which has just won an Emmy award for its author Josh Fox, and which exposes the environmental disaster that is unfolding not only in USA but in our close Asian neighbours and even in Queensland I am appalled at the way Australia is encouraging coal seam gas exploration and mining.

There is no safe clean method of extracting coal seam gas. Water is forced underground under pressure together with a host of lethal chemicals including benzene and toluene to assist the 'fracking process', once in place they stay there forever with disastrous results on the underground water supplies. Coal seam gas companies have admitted that they do not know what to do with the salty waste water, a result of the process; see <http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/qld-rally-targets-coal-seam-gas-industry-20110531-1fedq.html>

People can no longer drink the water in areas close to these projects. Fresh water has to be trucked in. Anyone who tries to stand up to the gas barons is shot down in flames not only figuratively but literally as well. A match or lighter held near water running from a tap explodes into flame. The air is saturated with the fumes and people are becoming desperately ill and no one in government listens. All they can think of is a quick buck with no thought for the horrendous consequences for future generations.

In one place in the Philippines, Sidoarjo, as soon as the CSG explorers started drilling they triggered a mud volcano which cannot be quenched.
(See <http://www.wired.com/wiredscience/2010/02/mudvolcano/>)

The villages in the area have been drowned in evil smelling mud and the locals are totally helpless. The government blames an earthquake for the disaster which has been disproved by scientists, meanwhile the villagers are helpless- no homes- no agricultural land left- no income- just starvation looming. It is an abomination. The man who has been investigating the disaster made the following comments: *"The disaster was caused by pulling the drill string and drill bit out of the hole while the hole was unstable," said Richard Davies, director of the Durham Energy Institute and co-author of a new paper in the journal Marine and Petroleum Geology, in a press release. "This triggered a very large 'kick' in the well, where there is a large influx of water and gas from surrounding rock formations that could not be controlled."*

There are 100's of cases worldwide of disastrous consequences from this process. In view of the burgeoning world population it is vital that our precious agricultural land and water supplies are kept free from all pollution and environmental contamination.

Why are we still continuing with mining and production of fossil fuel based energy projects when they are finite? Instead we should ramp up renewable energy projects which could provide countless new clean green jobs and which are an infinite source of energy. For example, Carnegie Wave Energy has just begun producing electricity at its wave power farm near Garden Island off the West Coast of Australia. The potential worldwide usable energy that could be extracted from waves is estimated to provide power equivalent to that of the current worldwide installed capacity for electricity generation.
www.carnegiwave.com

I urge you therefore to ban any more coal seam gas exploration throughout the whole of Australia. We cannot allow greedy corporate fat-cats to line their pockets at the expense of the human health and well being of future generations.

From Estelle Ross