

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Amendment Bill 2013

[Provisions]

Submission to the Senate Inquiry

Dear Senators:

Please consider the following points which I submit for your consideration when discussing the above Bill relating to the Federal oversight of the impacts of coal and coal seam gas mining on water resources

1. I would like to see this Bill passed quickly through the Senate, as it is strongly supported
2. I am happy that the bilateral approval provisions of the EPBC Act cannot apply to coal and coal seam gas developments that impact on water resources, and that there have been some improvements to the exemptions.
3. I want to ensure that the exemptions contained in the Bill are minimised, and that key projects, such as the Arrow Coal Seam Gas project in Qld and Camden in western Sydney, are not allowed to be exempted from it. Hence I would still encourage minor amendments to remove s22 2 b) and d) if possible.
4. I recognise that there are other amendments that would substantially improve the Bill, that may be required in the future, such as:
 - Amending the Bill to cover all unconventional gas mining, including shale gas and tight gas, and unconventional coal mining
 - Strengthening the role of the Independent Expert Scientific Committee
 - Defining significant impacts on water resources
 - Introducing a set of requirements for the Minister to consider when making decisions on water resource impacts
 - Including a requirement for bioregional assessments prior to approval

Thank you for your attention to my submission. I hope you will make use of my suggestions as you consider this Bill.

Kind Regards,