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Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
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RE: Clean Energy Finance Corporation Amendment (Grid Reliability Fund) Bill 2020

Submission by (Rev) Ken Devereux

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I am pleased that the Government is giving serious attention to the environment, however, it is deeply concerning that camouflaged amongst the language of 'renewable energy' and response to community concern about climate change, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation and the Australian Renewable Energy Agency are having their priorities diverted away from the enhanced development of genuine primary renewable energy sources.

It is not an appropriate priority to use public funds to subsidise large profit making fossil fuel companies in the quest for reliable carbon capture and storage.

Please take seriously substantial information provided by organisations such as the Australian Conservation Fund, GetUp and Alec Campbell's Submission (No. 1 to this Inquiry) in order to recognize that gas resources are not as environmentally benign as they once were thought to be.

As a Christian I am deeply committed to the importance of caring for the earth and using its resources in the most cross-generational sustainable way as possible at the same time as providing for the economic and social security of Australia's population along in respectful collaboration with our international neighbours.

As an act of stewardship of the planet, in 2019 the Synod Standing Committee of the Uniting Church in Western Australia called on the Federal Government to prioritise investment in renewable energy provision and storage projects and not to provide further funding or subsidies to the expansion of fossil fuel projects or related infrastructure.

It is quite appropriate that fossil fuel suppliers are turning their attention to researching ways of reducing their carbon polluting activities. However, they should be encouraged to draw on their own substantial resources to investigate cleaner possibilities rather than diverting public funds from renewable sources such as wind, solar, hydro and ocean wave generating sources of energy.

I urge the Committee to recommend that the Senate amend the proposed legislation in the Grid Reliability Fund in order to remove authorisation for the CEFC to promote investment in fracking and gas production or distribution. A sustainable climate for the future requires urgent and disciplined action, not bowing down to vested fossil fuel interests.

Thank you for your consideration.