CUSTOMS AMENDMENT (PROHIBITION OF THE EXPORTATION OF URANIUM TO FRANCE) BILL 1986
(Private Senator's Bill)
Date introduced: 17 September 1986
House: Senate
Presented by: Senator the Hon. Norman Sanders

DIGEST OF BILL

Purpose
To prohibit the export of Australian uranium to France.

Background
In 1983 the Government suspended uranium exports to France as a protest against the continued testing of nuclear weapons by France in the South Pacific. Successive Australian Labor Party conferences have endorsed a policy of not exporting uranium to France so long as the nuclear testing in the South Pacific continued. This policy was confirmed at the National ALP Conference held in July 1986 at Hobart.

As part of the 1986 Budget, it was announced that the Government would allow the resumption of uranium exports to France.[1] At a subsequent meeting of the ALP National Executive, support for the policy of not exporting uranium was reiterated. Officers of the Party were directed to ensure that in future regular consultations were held with the Government on policy issues to ensure the integrity of policy was maintained in Government decisions.

The argument in favour of resuming uranium sales to France was largely based on financial considerations. When exports were suspended, the Government agreed to buy from Queensland Mines Limited (QML) the uranium which that company had planned to export to France. The cost of buying this uranium in 1985-86 was $42.9 million. It is expected that the decision to allow the resumption of exports will
result in a saving to the Budget of $66.2 million in 1986-87 and as much as $200 million per year in subsequent years.

Main Provisions

Clause 3 will insert a new section 112A into the Customs Act 1901 (the Principal Act). Proposed section 112A will prohibit the export of uranium to France until France ceases to test nuclear weapons in the South Pacific. An extra schedule, added to the Principal Act by clause 4, will set out the range of goods covered by proposed section 112A, including uranium ores, alloys and enriched uranium.

For further information, if required, contact the Science, Technology and Environment Group.

12 November 1986

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LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE

Reference


This Digest does not have any official legal status. Other sources should be consulted to determine the subsequent official status of the Bill.