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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Environment,
Communications and the Arts
Department of the Senate
Parliament House Canberra

RE: Inquiry into the Renewable Energy (Electricity) Amendment (Feed-in-Tariff) Bill 2008

I am a retired engineer with 30 years experience in the energy industry and 25 years in the renewables sector. I was one of 3 engineers who did the pioneering work leading to the 154MW "high-tech" photovoltaic power station under construction at Mildura.

I believe the feed-in-tariff (FiT) proposals are a red herring. They waste time, energy and resources, and distract from the stated purpose of reducing pollutants such as greenhouse gases.

Australia's biggest energy issue is our economic reliance on coal exports and the enormous worldwide consequences of reducing the global coal supply.

The current industry effect of green power, FiTs etc is to increase total electricity consumption on the grounds that we need to grow. This is counter-productive.

Any policy to support the renewables industry should proceed from the basis of reducing the output of fossil-fuel based energy, particularly electricity generation rather than on increasing the amount of alternatives. A broad range of coercive and market driven models are available.

New and existing, alternative/renewable technologies worth supporting must arise as a result of market influences. If not, the market must be changed.

Our market system, which does not reflect the laws of physics (nature), has produced, and will continue to produce our underlying problems. Pollution costs should be fully integrated at all levels of the market.

Alternative/ renewable technologies should again be robustly supported by the CSIRO (or similar independent body) to research, inform, guide, evaluate, and give technical support to all players including entrepreneurs, inventors, manufacturers, investors, customers, industry and government to help avoid squandering effort on "perpetual motion machines" and FiTs.

FiTs are open to wide scale rorting and will need vigorous policing. (Several such schemes have already been proposed at one major conference),

All of the aggregate claimed benefits of FiTs (less reliance on coal etc) can easily be achieved at vastly less cost on and off the grid by any one of the following:-

1. Widespread, coercive conservation measures (usually very low cost and very productive)
2. Moving successively down the carbon chain in all sectors eg away from coal to gas to cogeneration to renewables, not just leapfrogging.
3. Total ban on new public and private infrastructure which does not meet significantly higher lifecycle environmental standards, leading particularly with building (housing) design.

I urge the committee to concentrate on getting the "best bang for the buck". Reject FiTs.

Support Appropriate Industry Development. Support Conservation. **Cut Consumption.**