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PRIVATE SUBMISSION

SEPP - Schedule 2 - Modification to Schedule 1 State significant development - general, Clause 6(2A).

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by George Tlaskal
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I am a resident of Bulga Inlet in the Hunter Valley and I **oppose** the proposed modification of the NSW planning laws in relation to the coal seam gas exploration and mining. Our family has already experienced to have a Sydney Gas drilling rig 25 metres from our back fence and without being consulted by anyone. I completely agree with the statement issued by the NSW Nature Conservation Council [\[1\]](#) that reads in part:

Plans to change the NSW Mining SEPP to allow drilling near homes without a full environmental impact assessment undermines the credibility of NSW Government's promise to protect communities from coal seam gas development.

"The proposed changes to the Mining SEPP amount to a breach of faith with the people of NSW and should not be permitted," Nature Conservation Council of NSW CEO Kate Smolski said.

I also fully support the submission to this Amendment from the Hunter Valley Protection Alliance [\[2\]](#) where the relevant section reads:

SEPP - Schedule 2 - Modification to Schedule 1 State significant development - general, Clause 6(2A).

There is no logical basis for it. In fact the opposite. This permits CSG explorers to avoid a full environmental assessment and consent for fracking wells which could now be very close to residential areas.

In order to protect the landholders the 3 kilometre measurement must be made from the outermost wells in any set of wells. A full EIS is a MUST for any fracking operation in a set of wells.

I have been following and studying the science of the coal seam gas mining in Australia and around the world since 2004 when the Sydney Gas LTD first arrived into our valley. I cannot see any scientific reason why the well spacing and the buffer distance from residential areas, rivers and streams as well as from any valuable agricultural land should be measured from the centre of a well cluster as proposed in the Amendment [3]. On the contrary, I believe that the buffer zone should be measured **from the edge of the fracking zone of the most proximal well**. This would be usually something like 400m from the nearest vertical well bore or from the horizontal well lateral - depending on the geology.

Coal seam gas production is not like any other type of mining. It is mining a very diffuse energy source. It requires access to huge areas of land in the coal-bearing sedimentary basins that happen to contain just about the best agricultural lands in this country. The following picture illustrates the problem with the unconventional gas drilling from the American experience.



Our CSG industry, just like all other forms of the unconventional oil and gas industries, has a tremendous potential for a serious damage to our environment, our health and to the social fabric of our rural residential areas. This has been demonstrated by the research work of the NSW Chief Scientist [4], CSG forum [5] and by hundreds of media reports - far too many to mention in a document of this sort. There is even an American "List of the harmed" [6] that, as of today, shows 6085 documented cases where the lives of ordinary Americans have been destroyed by the arrogance of the unconventional oil and gas industry. A group of concerned medical professionals from the New York state [7] concluded that:

Our examination of the peer-reviewed medical and public health literature uncovered no evidence that fracking can be practiced in a manner that does not threaten human health.

In the light of all this evidence we should proceed very carefully with the CSG in NSW and in the country as a whole. We certainly should not dilute the power of the existing regulations just to please AGL. That is why I oppose this Amendment.

George Tlaskal
Bulga, Hunter Valley.

References

- [1] Mining policy change is a breach of faith.
<http://www.nature.org.au/news/2014/07/mining-policy-change-is-a-breach-of-faith/>
- [2] Hunter Valley Protection Alliance: COAL SEAM GAS EXCLUSION ZONES SUBMISSION, 15th July 2014.
http://huntervalleyprotectionalliance.com/pdf/HVPA-CSG_ExclusionZonesSubm-20140715F.pdf
- [3] State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) Amendment 2014
http://planspolicies.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6596
- [4] Coal Seam Gas Review. <http://www.chiefscientist.nsw.gov.au/coal-seam-gas-review>
- [5] Independent Coal Seam Gas Science Forum. <http://csgscienceforum.com/>

[6] A List of the Harmed <http://pennsylvaniaallianceforcleanwaterandair.wordpress.com/the-list/>

[7] COMPENDIUM OF SCIENTIFIC, MEDICAL, AND MEDIA FINDINGS DEMONSTRATING RISKS AND HARMS OF FRACKING (UNCONVENTIONAL GAS AND OIL EXTRACTION)
<http://concernedhealthny.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CHPNY-Fracking-Compendium.pdf>