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Executive Director, Resources and Industry Policy  
Department of Planning & Environment  
GPO Box 39  
Sydney NSW 2001

17 July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) Amendment (Significance of Resource) 2015. Repeal of clause 12AA of State Environmental Planning Policy (Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries) 2007.**

The following submission is made by the Discalced Carmelite Nuns in response to the proposed change to the Mining SEPP. We strongly support the repeal of clause 12AA.

In August 2013 we made a submission opposing the insertion of Clause 12AA into the Mining SEPP. We are pleased now to be given the opportunity to write in support of the Clause's repeal, a proposal which shows good sense on the part of the NSW Government.

We believe that it has been false economy to give priority to the economic significance of a mining resource over environmental and social considerations. All factors should carry equal weight in the assessment of development applications. Protecting the health of the natural environment is the fundamental basis on which any mining development application should be assessed, since without it the social and economic wellbeing of the residents of NSW will ultimately be jeopardised. In particular, in an arid land like Australia and in the face of accelerating global warming, it is essential that none of our groundwater resources be compromised by mining. On all these grounds we strongly support the repeal of Clause 12AA to allow for a properly balanced approvals process.

We hold that all development in NSW should be governed by the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, i.e. that all development applications should be assessed with equal weight given to their short- and long-term environmental, social and economic impacts. The long-term economic benefit of the State of NSW and its residents depends on assuring the health of the natural environment (underground, on the Earth's surface including fresh water and the ocean, and the atmosphere). Indeed, as a developed country we have a responsibility to care for the environment not only for ourselves but for the benefit of all people beyond our shores now and in the future. As an example, the Liverpool Plains in NSW should be off-limits for coal mining (or any other form of mining). On this matter, we refer you to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* (June 2015) 'On the care of our common home', paragraph 185 of which states:

In any discussion about a proposed venture, a number of questions need to be asked in order to discern whether or not it will contribute to genuine integral development. What will it accomplish? Why? Where? When? How? For whom? What are the risks? What are the costs? Who will pay those costs and how? In this discernment, some questions must have higher priority. For example, we know that water is a scarce and indispensable resource and a fundamental right which conditions the exercise of other human rights. This indisputable fact overrides any other assessment of environmental impact on a region.

It is becoming increasingly clear worldwide that the tide is turning against the use of fossil fuels and towards research and development of renewable energy sources. We welcome this change and encourage the NSW Government to support it by reducing its reliance on coal and coal seam gas and implementing policies that foster the development of carbon-neutral energy technologies.

Merely extracting finite mineral resources and exporting them does not ensure the long-term good of our State and its people, nor of the wider world. In this matter, we are deeply disturbed that our State and Federal governments encourage overseas governments and private companies to own vast tracts of land in NSW (e.g. Shenhua Watermark) and in other States for the purpose of exploiting non-renewable resources. We are also concerned when the exploitation of these assets utilises 'a fly-in fly-out labour force' which is not subject to Australian working conditions.

If we really were the 'premier state' and the 'clever country' that we claim to be, our Governments would show exemplary leadership by vigorously implementing Ecologically Sustainable Development. Repealing Clause 12AA of the Mining SEPP is a welcome step towards this goal.

In addition, we wish to see the NSW and Federal Governments give priority to developing our own country's *human* resources to take advantage of our intellectual and multicultural wealth to support renewable energy development, agriculture, manufacturing, arts, humanities and other activities that make for long-term economic, environmental and social health and wellbeing.



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Sister Jocelyn Kramer OCD

On behalf of the Discalced Carmelite Nuns, Varroville:

Sisters Sarah Carpenter, Joan Fanning, Elizabeth Franks, Patricia Giuliano, Helen Hill, Jennifer Jones, Jocelyn Kramer, Gemma O'Keeffe, Anna Skoczylas