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Research Director
Agriculture and Environment Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane, QLD, 4000

**RE: Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation
Amendment Bill 2016**

To Whom It May Concern,

It has come to my attention that the abovementioned Bill is being passed through parliament, and I'm grateful for the chance to put my thoughts to you.

While I see that passing such a Bill could cover some gaps in old processes from previous Governments, I'm concerned that it's a bit of a knee-jerk reaction to the issue of groundwater assessment; and has significant implications for those employed in the resources sector by companies with Mining Lease Applications in their final stages.

I work with New Hope Group, a company who has been seeking approval to expand the New Acland Coal Mine for the last ~9 years. We have invested a great deal of time, and millions of dollars into providing information for this approval to four different Governments, and have endured a lengthy Land Court process, where just over two weeks was spent on the issue of groundwater.

I ask you: why should a project that has already been through the scrutiny of groundwater discussions in land court be subject to repeat the very same process again? Surely, for projects like ours that are in the latter stages of the approvals process, there must be better transitional arrangements; rather than duplicating a process that has already been completed. Especially if that process is then allowed to be objected to again, opening up further land court proceedings which have already been covered in land court hearings for the Mining Lease Approval. This seems like a waste of time, money and resources!

If this legislation is passed without amendment, it will mean that New Acland Coal (NAC) will have to provide more groundwater information, in addition to what has been already supplied through the land court process, to obtain a Water Licence. It also means that NAC cannot be granted a Water Licence until after a Mining Lease is granted; and the new information that is being requested of this Bill would include a groundwater baseline assessment that could take between 6 to 12 months to collect.

Time is running out for New Acland Coal; we don't have another 12 months to wait. Economic reserves are expected to be depleted by the end of 2017. Maintaining the current employment numbers across the whole company is not going to be plausible with the added process risks and uncertainties surrounding this Bill, and further exacerbation of timeframes and cost.

I fear for the security of my job, and what that means for my family, and my colleagues and their families. My partner and I are 30 years old; we have just purchased our first house together, and have wedding and family plans in the near future – we have already put so much on hold owing to the poor position of the resources industry in Queensland; I can see that the effect of this Bill on New Hope Group is going to have direct impacts on me.

Please. I urge you to consider how this will affect the people of the resources industry. It's not that I don't think there should be baseline groundwater assessments; it's that I think that there are companies who have done the right thing for a very long time who are going to be impacted the most by this Bill, and it's not fair on them, their employees or families.

In summary, there must be better transitional arrangements for project in the latter stages of the approval process. Why should a project that has already been through the land court process be subject to that again? It causes further time delays, consumes resources, and costs a significant amount of money – all for process that duplicates the Land Court process for Mining Lease Applications. And it puts stress onto families that work for those companies. It affects me.

Kind Regards,



Danique Bax

