

Research Director  
Agriculture and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

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

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to express my concern about certain elements of the **Environmental Protection (Underground Water Management) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016** currently being considered by your Committee.

It is my understanding that the provisions of the Bill will apply to both new and existing projects and that projects that are currently in the application stage will also be subject to the full provisions. I work for the New Hope Group which has a current application for a Stage 3 Mining Lease at its' New Acland Coal Mine. If the Bill is passed in its' current form this application would be further delayed. I have grave concerns that this would put at risk my ongoing employment with the New Hope Group, a company for whom I have worked for over 10 years.

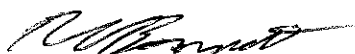
The company lodged the Stage 3 application over 8 years ago to ensure there was adequate time to have the approval appropriately assessed and enable a seamless transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3. The Project has been through 2 EIS processes and has been the subject of the longest ever Qld Land Court hearing and has now been delayed so long that there is a significant risk of a discontinuity between the end of Stage 2 coal and the start of Stage 3. Should this occur the company has identified that jobs will be at risk. Understandably there seems little point in keeping people employed if there is no coal to mine because of delays to approvals.

I do not understand why a Project that has been being assessed for over 8 years and is 2 steps away from being granted (Land Court Recommendation then Ministerial approval) should now face additional hurdles. The current Bill also opens the possibility of a further Land Court challenge. Again, why should a Project that is so far advanced have to go through Land Court a second time?

For a government that spruiks itself as being on the side of the workers and focussed on generating jobs for Queenslanders to now be putting further hurdles in front of a Project that has been comprehensively assessed over a period of more than 8 years beggars belief. I am 47 years old, married with 2 young children and a mortgage. I have never been out of work and find the uncertainty around my ongoing employment caused by the ongoing delays to the project highly stressful.

I respectfully submit that the Bill should include better transitional arrangements for projects in the latter stages of the approval process, such that the New Acland Stage 3 project is not subject to further delays.

Yours faithfully



Ross Bennett

