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17 August 2012

Research Director
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
QLD, 4000

Email: arec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Reducing regulatory burdens for Queensland's agriculture and resource industries

North Queensland Conservation Council would like the following points to be taken into account as part of the inquiry into reducing regulatory burdens for the agriculture and resource industries.

1. As detailed in Paper No.1 of July 2012, the primary COAG principle of best practice when considering modifying the level of regulation is "establishing a case for action before addressing a problem". In the current situation this has not been done. There is no data or hard evidence to demonstrate a positive net cost associated with regulatory burdens, especially with environmental regulations.
2. In the past regulation has been effective in preventing
 - Oil rigs on the Great Barrier Reef
 - Cattle grazing in the Victorian Alps
 - A dam blocking the majestic Franklin River
 - Sand mining on Fraser Island
 - A new coal port in pristine Shoalwater Bay
 - Traveston Crossing Dam blocking the Mary River, and
 - A major road through the wild forests of the Tarkine.
3. Regulation is essential to protect the 'voiceless, penniless' environment losing out against powerful and wealthy agricultural and resource sectors.
4. Governments at all levels and all persuasions regularly espouse the importance of the triple bottom line – the importance of having strong positive outcomes for the environment, the community and the economy. Unfortunately, in our current society, concern for the economy regularly outweighs concern for the health of society (beyond jobs) and the environment.
5. We are currently facing a situation where by the reckless expansion of the coal industry (especially in Queensland) is looking to increase fourfold the production of coal. Burning of this coal will increase global carbon emissions by 16-17%, with devastating impacts on climate change and the Great Barrier Reef.

6. If the quality of life in Australia (especially Queensland) is not to plummet, it is essential that the health of the environment takes equal if not greater precedence in economic and social decisions, and not treated as a tertiary issue.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Tubman', written in a cursive style.

Wendy Tubman
Coordinator