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PB:JH

25 January 2013

Address all correspondence
to the Chief Executive Officer
PO Box 551, DALBY, QLD 4405

info@wdrc.qld.gov.au

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
Attention: Ms Stephanie Cash

By email: arec@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Ms Cash,

Re: Mining and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2012 - Submission

The Western Downs Regional Council (WDRC) thanks you for the opportunity to respond to the 'Mining and Other Legislation Bill 2012 (Bill) and provides the following submission.

The WDRC overall supports the aim of the Bill in reducing green and red tape, allow co-location of infrastructure on pipeline licences, remove potential ambiguity in relation to the definition of occupier and standardising statutory roles. However, we would raise the following issues for your consideration.

1. Lack of Consultation

Firstly, the WDRC is disappointed at the lack of consultation with local councils. The WDRC currently has 99 major resource sector projects and 247 sub-projects, therefore, any amendments to legislation pertaining to mining may have ramifications for our Council. Further, the time allowed by the state government to respond to the Bill is unacceptable when future consequences of the amendments may affect our region. This is particularly pertinent over the Christmas and New Year holiday period, when staffing resources are more limited.

2. De-regulation Issues

The WDRC would raise concern that under the Bill, small scale mining activity would not be required to prepare and submit an Environmental Authority. In WDRC's opinion, this reduction of regulation may:

1. Turn a pro-active approach to monitoring mining activities to a more re-active approach, where proponents of smaller mining activities could more easily breach their environmental duty of care;
2. Contribute more easily to greater harm from a cumulative effect from the numbers of mining projects as stated above; and
3. Will not provide WDRC with information as to who, where, and what level of activity is occurring in our region. This can impact on the WDRC's ability to understand and provide the appropriate levels of management and governance. There are further cumulative impacts on our utilities in relation to the provision of water, waste and sewerage services that are already under pressure from the resource sector and related activities.

3. Co-location of Infrastructure and Activities on Pipeline Licences

The WDRC is supportive of co-location of infrastructure and activities on pipeline licenses. However, with co-location comes greater risk. WDRC therefore believes approvals must include a condition for increased monitoring on these licences.

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We again thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission and look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a final flourish that extends to the right.

Phil Berting PSM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER