

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee

Parliament House, Brisbane, QLD. 4000

27.10.2013

Re: SUBMISSION to the Inquiry into the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill)

As a concerned citizen and resident of North Stradbroke Island I write to declare my strong opposition to the above Bill, which proposes the extension of time for mining at Enterprise mine on NSI from 2019 to at least 2035.

The insultingly brief time allowed for submissions [*1 week!*], and the 'consultation process' with only Sibelco reveal this government's bias in favour of Sibelco and its wishes. Nonetheless, I add my voice to those who object and respectfully ask you to heed our comments.

Why I object

1. Economic argument

A [spurious] argument has been put that the island's economy requires a further 20 years to transition from sand mining - in addition to the eight-year extension already granted by the former state govt. A 'transition' period of nearly three decades is extravagant and completely unnecessary and - I would guess - would be unprecedented in its generosity to a private enterprise.

So this 'economic' rationale suggests that it's driven by the Qld govt.'s interest in the tempting royalties and bulking of state coffers, as well as Sibelco's aim to maximise profits, rather than any genuine concern for the island economy.

Instead, the island economy most needs urgent transition to an economic base *not* dependent on fluctuating global demands, as mining most surely is. Whatever it is, the new economy must be sustainable, as mining obviously is not, and the sooner we exit mining the better for the island and its long-term future.

Many good heads have researched economic options and strategies already, and have found that NSI's future economic strength depends on having a sustainable, diverse economy which is rooted in the island's natural assets and values, including tourism, education, arts and indigenous culture. Fortunately, there are already 'success stories' of projects and emerging businesses. The likes of these should be given more active govt. attention and support now.

2. Environmental argument

Submission to ARE Cttee., **Objecting to -**
Stradbroke Is. Protection and Sustainability and Another Act Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill)

Straddie's environment is precious and vulnerable. The beautiful landscape, flora and fauna constitute perhaps its greatest natural asset, yet this is what mining destroys in the process of exploiting its mineral assets. The notion of quick-fix 'rehabilitation' by Sibelco of what Nature took millennia to create is absurd. Yet they would contend they can put it back to "how it was". Sadly, they cannot - regardless of what their big-bucks PR campaigns would have us believe.

The natural environment is the very asset our state govt. should be at pains to PROTECT, not further exploit through destructive mining. For it is the *beauty* of our natural island environment that will be vital for successful tourism and other sustainable enterprises of the future. Permitting continued and extended destruction of the environment [as would be the case with the proposed Bill] is at odds with a sustainable economy for NSI.

In any case, current and future traditional owners, residents and visitors will be seriously disadvantaged if the Bill is passed, thereby weakening [needed] environmental controls. Instead of further protecting what remains of Straddie's natural assets, the proposed Bill would put the mining interests first - at the environment's expense.
Please do not allow this.

3. Conclusion

There are other important reasons to oppose this Bill, including the rights of Native Title holders and ethical objections. However, I am not confident that this govt. puts as much weight on these matters as it does economic ones.

We all accept that the mining is not a forever industry; it will end. The question is when. And for what reasons. The govt. of the day has a duty to ensure the best and fairest outcomes for all, and especially for the stakeholders most affected. The proposed Bill is clearly biased towards the mining enterprise which has most profit at stake, with scant regard for the long-term interests of this island, its environment, its people, economy and culture.

I ask you to reject the Bill.

Yours sincerely,
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