

28 October 2013

Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee
Queensland Parliament
arec@parliament.queensland.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam,

ACF Submission on North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and another Act Amendment Bill 2013

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) welcomes the opportunity to submit its views. ACF are deeply concerned by the apparent removal of environmental protection provisions and the lowering of environmental standards in the proposed Bill.

The Bill and the new Environmental Authority embedded within it, remove the requirement for:

- environmental harm not to occur beyond the mining tenements to adjoining National Parks and Ramsar sites (A5, A6);
- mining not to occur on Category A or Category B environmentally sensitive areas, except for ML 1109 (A7) (see G3).
- baseline environmental studies and an environmental studies Report (A10 - 13);
- investigation of harm to perched waterbodies (A31);
- rehabilitated areas to be free of declared weeds (H22);

By removing restrictions on the mine path, the bill appears to allow for mining to occur in environmentally sensitive areas that are essential habitat for rare and threatened species listed in the Queensland Nature Conservation Act, including the vulnerable Wallum Sedge frog.

The Bill also permits mining activity directly adjacent to the internationally significant Moreton Bay Ramsar wetland site and existing National Park areas, *with no provision for protective buffer zones*.

ACF believes this general lowering of environmental standards will significantly increase the environmental impact of Enterprise Mine and this should trigger a new state level environmental assessment.

ACF are also concerned that this bill facilitates the expansion of a mine that currently has no approval or exemption under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act. An independent hydrological Report by Geologist Dr Errol Stock has found that the Enterprise mine is causing a substantial and measurable change in water flows in to the Ramsar listed 18 Mile Swamp wetland. Ramsar listed wetlands are a Matter of National Environmental Significance (MNES) under the EPBC Act, and any activity that has, or is likely to have, a significant impact on a MNES require approval from the federal Environment Minister.

The Enterprise mine is currently under investigation by the federal Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities for non-compliance with the EPBC Act. Any expansion of the Enterprise mine will further trigger the EPBC Act. This Bill should therefore not be passed until this investigation has been completed and the matter is resolved.


Furthermore, ACF believes that the Bill unjustifiably delays large areas of the Island (80%) becoming national park to be jointly managed by the Quandamooka native title holders. The Bill also allows for many areas that are earmarked become National Park to be mined and degraded first.

Despite many promises, the Quandamooka people were not consulted over this Bill and have never had the opportunity to give or withhold their consent to the expansion of mining on their country.

Finally, the supposed purpose of the bill is to help transition the Stradbroke Island economy away from mining and towards more sustainable nature based tourism, recreation and education. But no plan or resources to achieve this transition are included in the Bill. Instead unsustainable and environmentally degrading sand mining has simply been further entrenched.

On the basis of these concerns, ACF is of the firm belief that the North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and another Act Amendment Bill 2013 should not be passed by the Queensland Parliament.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require further information regarding this submission.



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