

From: [Jenny](#)
To: [Agriculture Resources and Environment Committee](#)
Cc: [Premier](#); [Minister for Natural Resources and Mines](#)
Subject: Submission addressing The Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Bill 2014: The proposed removal of community rights to object to mines
Date: Tuesday, 8 July 2014 10:54:21 AM

The Research Director,
Agriculture, Resources and Environment Committee,
Parliament House, George Street
Brisbane 4000

8.7.14

As a Queensland grandmother I am distressed to learn that this Bill proposes to significantly reduce legal rights for landholders and the general community. Reckless government decisions made now, favouring outdated polluting energy industries like coal will determine public health and environmental sustainability for future generations.

It is widely recognised that coal mining is a dirty industry which irreversibly damages and depletes waterways. Open cut coal mining sacrifices our valuable agriculture, fishing and tourism industries. Its infrastructure destroys swathes of nature reserves, wildlife, endangered species. Air pollution from coal mining operations is a known public health hazard.

I ask the Committee to take on board ABC's 4 Corners program last night: '...Meanwhile, back in Australia the Federal Government is being lobbied by power producers using coal and gas to wind back the renewable energy targets that would see 20 per cent of this country's power generated by renewables by the end of the decade. Little wonder they want the targets lowered. The explosion in wind farms and solar rooftop panels in homes across Australia has already cut the demand for electricity and left them with gold-plated infrastructure that can no longer be justified. For one Queensland company, the decentralisation of power production has been devastating..'

If governments decide "to wind back the policy clock and downplay renewables, it will lose a high-tech cutting-edge industry while it props up old-style big polluters. As economist and author Jeremy Rifkin puts it, the choice is stark:
"It's ridiculous. Australia's the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy. There's so much sun, there's so much wind off the coast, and so it makes absolutely no sense when you have an abundance of renewable energy, [to] rely on a depleting supply of fossil fuels with all of the attendant consequences to society and the planet."

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/2014/07/07/4038488.htm>

I am satisfied with the current law providing for public notification of all proposed mines so that any person or group is entitled to object to the proposed mine and have the objection heard in open court.

[The Mineral and Energy Resources \(Common Provisions\) Bill 2014](#) was introduced to

Queensland Parliament on 5 June as part of a larger '*Governing for Growth*' initiative.

I believe the precautionary principle and fiduciary duty of care are also ignored in this Bill in the following ways:

I understand that the Queensland Government proposes to remove public notification and community rights to object to the Queensland Land Court for, in effect, 90% of proposed mines. By contrast, the current law provides for public notification of all proposed mines and any person or group is entitled to object to the proposed mine and have the objection heard in open court.

Only 'affected persons' will be able to object to the decision to grant a mining lease tenure. This does not even include neighbours, unless their land is needed for access.

Only 'high risk' mines will be publicly notified for objection on environmental grounds which is predicted to be only 10% of mines in Queensland. This means that for 90% of mines existing public objection rights will be lost.

Landholder consent provisions currently in place for 'restricted land' (basically, land nearby to homes and businesses) will be totally removed where the proposed mine is open cut.

I call on the Committee to approach this legislation with a view to empowering, not disempowering communities. That is, to keep existing provisions that require public notification of all proposed mining projects, to allow any person or incorporated group to object to all mining leases and environmental authorities on all the existing grounds.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission.

Jenny Chester,



SOUTHPORT,
Queensland 4215