

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

From: plainswanderer
Sent: Tuesday, 15 December 2015 6:07 PM
To: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: amendment to the Water legislation Amendment bill. vitally important.

Please accept this as a submission to the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 (WLA).

In a few years, it will be crystal clear that water for agriculture is infinitely more valuable than a few years of mineral extraction. Climate change will prove such a problem for food production in Australia and the world, with rainfall changes, that you will be judged by generations following, if you risk further our reserves for the sake of this decade's budgets. It is clear that we are in for a rough time, but short term expediency is a culpable path. The value of food production is infinitely more important and long term than one government's scalp. You need to do a massive public education programme with debates in the media about these issues so that you bring the less informed along with you. Bring the scientists to the subject. The country now has the possibility to view reality of climate change honestly. Use this opportunity. Come and face the reality. Forests are already dying from drought in the Amazon, SW of western Aust and western Canada and the U.S. Plants cannot adapt to the rate of change already. Consider the implications of this. Any hotter will reduce food production severely. You need to change your priorities and rapidly. Also new coal mines are idiocy. For God's sake start educating the populace so that the reality is accepted. Water is the top priority.

We note the changes that the WLA makes to the Water Reform and Other Legislation Amendment Act (WROLA). However, we are deeply concerned about one very important amendment to the WROLA Bill which is MISSING from the WLA.

The WLA should include an additional section which revokes Part 4 of WROLA. Part 4 of WROLA gives the mining industry a statutory right to take underground water and removes current requirements for them to get a water licence.

Part 4 of WROLA will harm agricultural water users and the environment because it will:

1. Remove the requirement for miners to obtain a water licence for the vast quantities of groundwater that they generally extract during mining operations
2. Reduce the ability of the Qld Government to act transparently to prevent unsustainable levels of water extraction by miners during operations
3. Remove the right for adjoining landholders whose water resources will be affected or lost due to the mining operations to challenge the grant of a licence
4. Remove the role of the Land Court as final independent arbiter who can rule on appeals against water licences granted to coal miners

Failure to revoke Part 4 of WROLA represents a very substantial breach of the promises which the Qld Government made in the lead up to the election, when it promised to *'repeal the Newman Government water laws which will....allow for over allocation of Queensland's precious water resources'*.

Failure to revoke Part 4 of WROLA also breaches promises that were made by the Qld ALP to restore community objection rights against mining, because it removes the right of adjoining landholders to object to the provision of water licences to miners.

Recommendations

1. We request that the WLA is not passed unless it is suitably amended to revoke Part 4 of WROLA, and thus to prevent the granting of statutory water rights to the mining industry.
2. We generally support other provisions of the WLA, although we believe that the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development should be extended to apply to the resources sector under Chapter 3 of the Water Act.

Dr Diana O'Connor.