

Acting Committee Secretary  
Innovating, Tourism Development and Environment Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street, Brisbane Qld 4000

15 March 2019

Dear Acting Committee Secretary,

I believe the environment; nature is very important and caring for it should be part of our everyday lives, not something that is dictated by government legislation and outrageous penalties.

As a primary producer our land is our biggest asset, therefore its health is a primary concern. Erosion and sediment runoff is a priority because losing your soil ultimately means decline in pasture thus a decline in our productivity and animal health. It is vital as part of our business that we care for our soil first.

I strongly disagree that agricultural practices of Regional Queensland (The Bill explanatory notes clearly states this is a Bill for regional Queensland) are responsible for the health (declining, changing or expanding) of the Great Barrier Reef. Farmers have always been innovative in their approach to farming practices and continue to improve. The proposed legislation, I believe will hamper these efforts and force farmers to pour valuable time and resources into more paper work, licensing, applications, etc. All taking time out of the paddock actually achieving goals.

I do not agree that a great majority of sediment from Regional Queensland during and after a flood event finds its way into the ocean. I have seen where flooding has occurred that as the water drops and recedes, a large amount of sediment is left behind on surrounding paddocks where the water level reached. Other sediment is caught by dams and weirs before reaching the ocean. The practice of desilting a dam is necessary because of the sediment caught by them. Runoff from Regional Queensland has a far lesser chance of reaching the ocean than that of the immediate coastal area.

There appears to be no focus on the ever increasing development along the coast and urbanisation. These areas create mass runoff because of bulk hard surfaces. Storm water is free to flow into the ocean without land to flow over or weirs and dams to catch sediment. This water carries with it pollutants from a concentration of people, activities and industrialisation of the coastal fringes. What has been done to capture the fertilizers and pesticides that are poured onto urban lawns, parks and gardens? These green areas in the urban areas are aesthetically pleasing, but provide no benefit to Queensland's economy. Farmers continually contribute to the economy while constantly being aware of the importance of maintaining healthy soils and limiting runoff from their farms.

Science has said climate is the major factor affecting the reef. Imposing more rules and putting in place more hoops for farmers to jump is not going to change the weather or flood events. I fail to see how further legislating Queensland's regional farmers is going to contribute to saving the reef. I believe this new proposed legislation is a political move to appease the global governments and commitments made to the Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as it is believed targets will not be met by 2025. It is all about meeting targets rather than productivity and saving the reef and Regional Queensland is being targeted again.

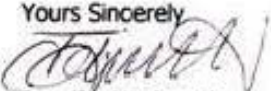
In my opinion; if you are losing water and you spend time digging up the existing pipeline and replacing it with a new one, but the tank has a hole in it, the problem is not fixed. Because you did not correctly investigate, assess and implement the right procedures to fix the water leak, you have wasted and lost time, money, resources and essentially your livestock and you did not achieve your goal.

This, I believe analogises this legislation.

Be sure your science is correct by using independent authorities or agents to verify scientific evidence. Identify and investigate all areas including urban runoff, sea vessel movements and collisions with the reef, port activities including dredging and where the sludge is dumped, the release of water from mining operations to name a few.

Is the reef really in danger or is it part of an ever changing life cycle within nature?  
Focus efforts and resources on real ways to fix real problems.

Yours Sincerely

  
Jennifer Hochmuth