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Australian Prawn
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Qld Chicken Growers
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Organisation

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Queensland Chicken
Meat Council

Flower Association of
Queensland Inc.

Pork Queensland Inc.

Fitzroy Food & Fibre
Association

Pioneer Valley Water
Co-operative Limited

Central Downs
Irrigators Limited

Burdekin River
Irrigators Area
Committee

Queensland United
Egg Producers

Emerging Primary
Industries Groups

- Biological Farmers
of Australia
- Queensland
Aquaculture
Industries
Federation

9th November 2012

State Development, Infrastructure and Industry Committee
Parliament House
Brisbane QLD 4000
Email: sdiic@parliamnet.qld.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary

RE: Submission to the Economic Development Bill 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on proposed changes to legislation as outlined in the above-mentioned Bill. Given the extremely short timeframe and lack of adequate consultation with industry, QFF will focus its submission on matters relating to amendments to the Environmental Protection Act 1994 only.

Queensland Farmers' Federation (QFF) is the peak body representing and uniting 16 of Queensland's rural industry organisations who work on behalf of primary producers across the state. QFF's mission is to secure a sustainable future for Queensland primary producers within a favourable social, economic and political environment by representing the common interests of its member organisations. QFF's core business centres on resource security; water resources; environment and natural resources; industry development; economics; quarantine and trade.

Our goal is to secure a sustainable and profitable future for our members, as a core growth sector of the economy. This submission is provided without prejudice to any submission or additional comment provided by our members.

QFF acknowledges that there is a significant environmental and economic problem when water is trapped in a mine site during and after major flooding events, and clearly effective measures are required to address the problem safely.

QFF is supportive of the proposal to allow for a mechanism that permits temporary water emissions from mines at times when river flows are suited to diluting and removing the mine water without detrimental impact to either the environment or downstream water users.

Downstream water users and environments could be impacted by the release of water from mine sites into river flows unless both the quality of the discharged water and the receiving water is considered. Farmers upstream of mine sites will also be concerned to ensure, wherever possible, only natural flow events are accessed for planned releases. If it is proposed to use releases from stored water facilities that provide services to other water users, there would have to be consultation with urban and agricultural interests likely to be affected.

Temporary releases must be well monitored to ensure flows can be managed properly. Monitoring and management arrangements must be fully transparent and costs involved must be met by the mine owner. In so doing, the water discharge applicant must make arrangements to ensure water quality monitoring assessments are made publicly available in real time.

Overall, it is important that temporary releases cannot be construed as a long term fix to a discharge problem nor as part of an ongoing approval. Better flood planning and management must be a priority to reduce the prospect of this problem occurring again.

QFF is very disappointed at the way in which this consultation process has been managed. While our organisation was listed as being consulted, as best as can be determined this could only be asserted on the basis of activities that occurred late last year as part of the former Department of Environment and Resource Management Environment Sub-Group for Flood Recovery. This committee considered the need for a process to deal with temporary environmental release licences. While this Bill is now within the Parliament, the associated arrangements for its implementation are still unknown and we therefore have no understanding of how releases are to be monitored and managed. Clearly the government will need to engage all key stakeholders to review these details and establish acceptable implementation procedures.

QFF appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Bill, and commend the committee and its secretariat on the best efforts in seeking feedback on its implications. If you require further information, please contact QFF Sustainable Agriculture Policy Officer *Adam Knapp* on (07) 3837 4747.

Yours sincerely



Dan Galligan
Chief Executive Officer