

Committee Secretary

State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Committee Secretary,

I would like to respond to your Mineral and Energy Resources and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 proposed amendments to the Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999. You have proposed in the bill that statutory position holders will only be able to be employed by a coal mine operator. I strongly disagree with your proposal on the grounds that it would impose a significant impact on my livelihood and would be contradiction of freedom of choice within my line of work as a statutory holders working in the underground coal mines.

You have stated that officials in relation to making safety complaints fear reprisal or impact on their employment. I have worked as an ERZ Controller for 6 years and I have been contracting for 12months and do not share these concerns of reprisal when raising safety concerns. It is the commitment of a statutory official to ensure a safe work environment within their zone which they have been appointed to control the activities in. As an ERZ Controller in a zone it is my responsibility to ensure a safe work environment. This is achieved by identifying hazards or substandard practices and ensuring I take action to put effective controls in place by fixing, removing or barricading the hazard or removing personnel from the area so coal mine workers are not exposed to the hazard.

With current legislation in place coal mine workers which includes statutory positions have certain obligations under section 39 of the act which they must abide by. By saying that you fear reprisal or impact on your employment because you don't work for the coal mine operator, I believe this is misleading and would go as far to say it would not matter for this person if they were a contractor or an employee of the mine operator they will always feel this way. It is an easy defence for not fulfilling you obligations.

By making statutory positions to be employed by the coal mine operator you are taking away my freedom of choice. I should be able to choose whether I work for the operator, or whether I provide my services in the way of contracting to the coal mine operator. By taking this choice away from me I believe I am being unfairly treated by this proposal and this will have a significant impact on my life. I should have the choice to contract or work for the operator. At this stage in my life I choose to contract as it benefits me and my family.

This proposal will not make a safer work environment, it will just limit what I can and can't do.

Regards,

Darren Heck

ERZ Controller (statutory position)

D & C Heck Mining Services

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