

COAL MINING SAFETY AND HEALTH AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2022

Submission No: 5
Submitted by: Association fo Mining and Exploration Companies
Publication:
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

AMEC SUBMISSION



To: Transport and Resources Committee

Re: Coal Mining Safety and Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022

Date submitted: 21 October 2022

Introduction

The Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) is strongly committed to ensuring the Queensland resources industry is one that is safe and strives to improve culture and performance. AMEC will always seek to support legislation that creates a strong and safe workplace for all and is a place where people want to work by choice. AMEC seeks to work collaboratively with the Queensland Government on safety issues impacting the coal and minerals industry going forward.

AMEC strongly advocates for a policy and regulatory environment that facilitates and accelerates the economic development of Queensland's critical minerals, from exploration to production and through to supply chain development.

Overall, AMEC supports the development of frameworks that are contemporary and recognise the changing nature of Queensland's resources industry to one that is rapidly seeing the emergence of successful junior and mid-tier explorers, developers and producers. The continuation of resources frameworks—be it for safety, environmental protection or a mining lease—that treat the industry as a homogenous being will not be successful in their implementation or achieve the outcomes being sought by the Queensland Government. Scalable frameworks that respond to footprint, hazard and risk are essential as government and industry navigate their way towards establishing a successful critical minerals industry, in partnership together.

About AMEC

AMEC is the national peak industry body representing over 520 mining and mineral exploration companies across Australia. Our members are explorers, emerging miners, producers, and a wide range of businesses working in and for the industry. AMEC's Queensland members, of which there are more than 60, work in and for the resources industry, exploring, developing and producing minerals including Antimony, Bauxite, Coal, Cobalt, Copper, Gold, Graphite, Lead, Lithium, Mineral Sands, Molybdenum, Nickel, Phosphate, Rare Earths, Silver, Tungsten, Vanadium and Zinc.

Response to the Bill

Part 1, Preliminary

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.

Part 2, Amendment of Coal Mining Safety and Health Act 1999

AMEC finds these proposals regarding the exceptions to direct employment requirements for coal mining statutory positions to be sound.

Part 3, Amendment of Geothermal Energy Act 2010

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.

Part 4, Amendment of Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.

Part 5, Amendment of Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.

Part 6, Amendment of Mineral Resources Act 1989

AMEC supports this proposal and its implementation. AMEC is supportive and pleased to see that the nomenclature has changed from 'new economy minerals' to 'critical minerals'. It is important to ensure that the definition of 'critical minerals' is such that the ambition and implementation of the Queensland Resources Industry Development Plan are not negatively impacted.

With regard to proposed section 291 under the Mineral Resources Act, AMEC suggests that this is sound, if it is supported by clear guidance and case studies (real or theoretical) that demonstrate clearly what 'start up and development costs' includes. The more clarity that can be provided, the more successful the implementation of this proposal will be.

Part 7, Amendment of Mineral Resources Regulation 2013

AMEC seeks that the Queensland Government consider including phosphate—a critical fertiliser mineral used by the agricultural industry—in the new Schedule 4A Critical minerals. There are significant phosphate deposits being developed in the north-west minerals province. Securing and therefore developing domestic supply of phosphate will mitigate the emerging risks of securing fertilisers necessary to maintain agricultural production. Some of the top jurisdictions from which phosphate is currently sourced from are suffering supply chain disruption as a result of geopolitical instability.

AMEC sees it as an opportunity for the Queensland Government to use its supply reliability as an investment attraction mechanism and consequently facilitate the development of phosphate in Queensland. The inclusion of phosphate will deliver further economic benefits in the form of reduced risk of access to fertilisers for the State's agricultural industry and improved food security domestically as well as internationally. Further there are research trials underway looking at the environmental benefits of Queensland's phosphate, namely its slow release nature and improved conditioning powers, and how these properties help reduce the levels of nutrient entering running off into waterways and entering sensitive catchments, such as the Great Barrier Reef.

Part 8, Amendment of Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.

Part 9, Other amendments

AMEC has no comment on this part of the Bill.



Conclusion

AMEC was encouraged that the government listened to feedback regarding the first version of the Bill and is continuing to consult on some proposals that had not been consulted on in detail. On important matters, such as safety, it is plainly beneficial to directly engage and consult with practitioners with operational expertise and experience, to ensure the delivery of effective outcomes. Failing to properly consult creates a significant risk of delivering poor outcomes, that do little to improve safety on mine sites.

AMEC is supportive of the rent deferral mechanism being proposed by the Department of Resources and recognises that this is the only lever available to the department that directly helps increase cash flow during a critical development period for junior and mid-tier explorers trying to become developers and producers. AMEC would like to take this opportunity to identify other mechanisms that would also help developers during this time, as well as facilitate broad alignment across Queensland Government departments and their ambitions and targets to achieve:

- State emissions reduction targets of achieving zero net emissions by 2050, with an interim target to reduce emissions by 30% below 2005 levels by 2030.
- Renewable energy target of 70% by 2032.
- Implementation of domestic supply chain and associated sustainable jobs creation ambitions.

Other mechanisms that will facilitate and accelerate the realisation of a critical minerals industry in Queensland include:

- The Department of Environment and Science exercising similar powers to those of the Department of Resources and implementing Environmental Authority fee deferral for critical minerals.

A commitment from government to reducing sovereign risk and ensuring Queensland internationally competitive as an attractive jurisdiction for investment. For further information contact:

Sarah Gooley, Queensland Director

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