



Speech by  
**Simon Finn**

**MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY**

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## **GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE BILL**

**Mr FINN** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (11.48 am): I, too, rise to support the Greenhouse Gas Storage Bill 2008 and acknowledge, like other members, the work of the minister for the development of this regulatory framework. Many people in this House have spoken about the impact of this framework on climate change mitigation.

This legislation is part of a tapestry of environment legislation that this government has brought through the House. We have seen tree-clearing legislation. We have seen a ClimateSmart homes program. We have seen a range of protections to the Great Barrier Reef, including recently regulating the run-off into the Barrier Reef. We have seen the green zones in our marine national parks increased, including the green zones in Moreton Bay which were increased from half a per cent to 16 per cent. We have seen development controls on wetlands, which the member for Barron River spoke about last night. We have seen the Daintree buyback.

Importantly, we have seen the government setting environment targets as part of its Q2 program—targets that are set to double the national park holdings and also targets that will produce a significant reduction in an individual's carbon footprint. So I welcome this legislation in the House which is part of that program of new environment legislation which will mitigate climate change.

I want to speak about a few aspects of the bill. The main purpose of the bill is to help reduce the impact of greenhouse gas emissions. It grants authorities the ability to explore for and use underground geological formations or structures to permanently store a greenhouse gas stream. The process of greenhouse gas storage involves the capture and transport of a greenhouse gas stream and injection of this stream into the underground geological formation for permanent and safe storage. Through the Geological Survey of Queensland of the Department of Mines and Energy and in conjunction with the Commonwealth government and the coal industry, the state government has developed the carbon geostorage initiative. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Bundamba and the role of the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division in developing strategies to deal with the impact of emissions from the coal industry.

The aim of the initiative is to identify within Queensland geological formations or structures that are able to store greenhouse gases permanently and safely and their approximate capacity. This is achieved through a statewide assessment of basin storage potential, and subsequent stages will provide a more detailed analysis of storage capacity. Currently, mapping is underway to assess basin storage potential.

I anticipate that the areas identified by the initiative as having storage potential will be some of the first areas the minister will release in a call for tenders. The tender process will require applicants for greenhouse gas exploration permits to compete against each other for the prospective areas released by the government. This will ensure, among other things, that the best value work program is obtained for each area, thus benefiting all Queensland.

I would now like to comment on the substance that will eventually be stored in the underground formations or structures once they have been discovered and their integrity to permanently store

greenhouse gases has been ascertained. The bill provides that the composition of a greenhouse gas stream allowed to be stored will be overwhelmingly carbon dioxide. The definition of 'greenhouse gas stream' in the bill recognises that in the process of separation of the carbon dioxide from its source there may be minor impurities, such as methane or nitrogen oxides, remaining in the greenhouse gas stream. However, elements such as mercury will not be acceptable inclusions in the stream.

I mentioned earlier that the process of greenhouse gas storage involves capture and transport of the gas stream and injection into an underground formation that will store these streams safely and permanently. One of the things I would like to comment on briefly is the energy policy that we found released in the opposition's economic objective statements. I was a bit concerned that what we saw from the opposition leader was a claim that coal-fired generation is the only energy source capable of providing baseload generation to meet industry and domestic demand for the foreseeable future. I acknowledge that there is a very strong reliance on the coal industry and that there will continue to be a significant reliance on coal. However, I am disappointed that the statement that it is the only energy source capable of providing baseload generation is a very narrow look at energy in this state.

What it fails to recognise is that we currently generate 780 megawatts of gas-fired baseload power, and we deliver that in south Queensland, in the Darling Downs and in Mount Isa. In fact, Mount Isa and the entire north-west mineral province run on gas-fired power. There is not a coal-fired power station in the region. The region is not connected to the coal-fired network. So the future is about building gas-fired baseload power in many ways, and that is what we are working on. We have been developing gas as a cleaner, more efficient fuel that will guide us through our transition into the carbon constrained future. This storage bill paves the way for carbon capture from gas-fired generation as well as coal-fired generation.

We have been aware of the potential for gas-fired generation for years, and our gas scheme ensured gas-fired generation will shortly make up 20 per cent of electricity generation in Queensland. I am disappointed that the economic objective statement of the coalition does not recognise gas as an important part of the baseload mix. I know the member for Callide knows about it because he has recognised the achievement of our gas scheme during parliamentary debate previously. I say to the member for Callide that we had better get the opposition leader up to speed on this, because there are alternatives being developed on baseload power generation that are not just reliant on coal. I do acknowledge that after 20 years in the parliament the opposition leader has recognised that we need to support this thing called clean coal. In the framework of him being a climate change denier and an economic crisis denier, I acknowledge that there is support in the opposition for this bill.

Importantly, in terms of the global economic crisis which we are involved in—and all of us on this side of the House acknowledge the crisis—what will come out of this legislation is an impact on a new green industry. The development of this high-tech research will provide opportunities for skilled workers in the minerals and petroleum industry to develop skills and work in the greenhouse gas storage industry. So this legislation will have an impact on developing jobs and developing green jobs. We need to be talking about a green economy and green-collared jobs. We need to be developing strategies and policies so that in this economic crisis, whilst we are focusing on jobs, we are not taking our eye off the ball when it comes to the environment and we are developing green industries and green jobs. This legislation is part of that. It is developing these green industry jobs in critical regional areas that are feeling the effects of the economic downturn. I congratulate the minister and commend the bill to the House.