



Speech by


Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Tuesday, 29 November 2011

RESOURCES LEGISLATION (BALANCE, CERTAINTY AND EFFICIENCY) AMENDMENT BILL

Introduction and Referral to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (7.35 pm): I present a bill for an act to amend the Environmental Protection Act 1994, the Geothermal Energy Act 2010, the Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009, the Mineral Resources Act 1989, the Petroleum Act 1923, the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 for particular purposes, and to make consequential amendments to the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, the City of Brisbane Act 2010, the Land and Resources Tribunal Act 1999, the Land Court Act 2000, the Local Government Act 2009, the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971, the Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003 and the Wild Rivers Act 2005 for particular purposes. I table the bill and the explanatory notes. I nominate the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee to consider the bill.

Tabled paper: Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill [\[6030\]](#).

Tabled paper: Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill, explanatory notes [\[6031\]](#).

The Resources Legislation (Balance, Certainty and Efficiency) Amendment Bill 2011 brings together government initiatives to support a viable and sustainable resources sector for Queensland. This bill will deliver on Bligh government commitments to:

- establish urban restricted areas to further limit resource exploration activities in and near urban centres;
- streamline processes for resource permit applications; and
- provide regulatory certainty for the coal seam gas (CSG) to liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry and affected parties.

The bill also includes an amendment to confirm existing jurisdictional arrangements for the safety and health of mining and petroleum work sites following the introduction of national work safety laws.

Urban restricted areas

Mr Deputy Speaker, Queensland is experiencing strong growth in the resources sector. This unprecedented growth has brought exploration and resource activities close to urban areas across Queensland. While economic benefits from the resources sector are vital to the ongoing prosperity of Queensland, consideration also needs to be given to the amenity and livability enjoyed by the people living in Queensland's clearly urban communities.

This bill proposes a clear yet flexible legislative framework to resolve land-use conflict between residential living and resource development in or near urban areas. Urban restricted areas will be declared by gazette notice to provide certainty for all affected parties about where resources activities are prohibited.

The balance and certainty provided by the bill will support further work mapping urban restricted areas and known or potential resource areas in local government planning schemes. The mapping process will be guided by a state planning policy. This will provide a single source of awareness of resource activity and urban growth potential for integrated development decisions into the future.

Resources acts will also be amended to make it clear that landholders everywhere across the state can say no to any resource activities coming within 100 metres of their home or 50 metres of other structures such as stockyards. However, geothermal tenures will be excluded from this framework to give clean-energy technology the opportunity to grow. And mining of industrial minerals, important to cost-effective building, such as sandstone, dolomite, limestone and slate, are excluded from being part of urban restricted areas.

I seek leave to have the remainder of this explanatory speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Streamlining initiatives

Mr Speaker, streamlining initiatives announced by the Bligh Government in 2009 are being put in place to save industry and government time and money.

Amendments in this Bill propose to streamline processes used to assess applications for resources permits and to ensure there are consistent processes across the Resources Acts.

Assessment processes for resources permits will be made more efficient by the launch of an online lodgement service for applicants. For example companies will be able to lodge online rather than having to lodge at a regional office close to the exploration area.

Amendments will also establish a single, consistent process for managing changes in ownership of resources permits.

In addition, an administrative burden on exploration permit holders is to be removed. Relinquishment will not be required yearly but rather in fixed term intervals with a total limit of 15 years. This change will also provide flexibility to permit holders to adjust work programs in response to extreme weather events, expertise and equipment shortages and developing land access agreements.

Some streamlining initiatives implemented already have resulted in savings of approximately \$3.1 million per annum to industry and approximately \$1.9 million per annum to government.

An example of an improvement already in place is that of registered searches which are now available online at no charge. This new service generates savings in time, money and effort for industry and the community. Previously interested parties would access this information at a regional office for a fee of \$40.

Some of the streamlining amendments will work hand in hand with proposed reforms introduced in the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2011. As a result the mines online portal will provide a whole-of-government view about processes for resource and environmental assessment.

This Bill supports the ongoing reforms being delivered by the Streamlining project to decrease the time taken for deciding new permit applications without compromising the rigour of the assessment process.

Regulatory certainty for the CSG/LNG industry

Mr Speaker, the emergence of a new CSG to LNG industry requires adjustment of the legislative framework that was primarily established to facilitate petroleum production. The amendments will provide certainty to industry and other affected parties and ensure efficient regulation.

To this end the Bill amends the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 to provide for the registration of pipeline easements. This will provide certainty for both landholders and pipeline licence holders in terms of their property rights. It will also provide an ongoing record of the pipeline when land is sold.

The Bill also proposes amendments to facilitate efficient transportation and treatment of CSG water and brine. The changes will allow industry to more efficiently comply with the government's CSG Water Management Policy which seeks to protect the State's water and environmental resources.

The amendments support improved environmental outcomes such as avoiding large salt fills from CSG water. In addition, economic benefits will be realised from ancillary commercial products such as soda ash and soda bicarbonate. Industry has also indicated community benefits for regions with long term employment in salt recovery plants.

Without these flexible arrangements proposed by the Bill, salt generated from each LNG train would require a landfill of approximately 600 hectares.

A vibrant resources sector is critical to the ongoing success of Queensland's economy. The Bligh Government supports a growing resources sector but understands that this growth needs to be balanced with maintaining Queensland's environment. It also needs to be balanced with the livability of urban communities and the importance of agriculture.

In addition to providing balance, the regulatory framework for the resources sector also needs to be clear and certain in its application for all parties involved in or affected by resources activities. The regulatory processes for assessing impacts and applications also need to be efficient and streamlined to minimise costs for industry and government.

This Bill achieves balance, certainty and efficiency in the amendments it proposes to Queensland's resources legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

First Reading

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Skills and Mining) (7.39 pm): I move—

That the bill be now read a first time.

Question put—That the bill be now read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Ryan): In accordance with standing order 131, the bill is now referred to the Industry, Education, Training and Industrial Relations Committee.