




Speech by

Lisa France

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (GREENTAPE REDUCTION) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (6.23 pm): I rise to support the Environmental Protection (Greentape Reduction) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I have spent many years as an environmental scientist labouring under the Environmental Protection Act and its onerous, costly requirements that do nothing more than defy common sense and good business practices. I am thrilled to be able to stand here today as an environmental scientist and commend this bill to the House.

While there are many excellent features of this bill, I would like to draw the House's attention to the green-tape reduction benefits in relation to resource activities which deliver significant benefits to both the mining and petroleum industry and the regulating body. As Assistant Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, and coming from a background as an environmental scientist, I believe that this bill provides for long-overdue reform while maintaining environmental outcomes. The LNP government is committed to cutting red tape and cutting costs, and this bill does both.

The bill streamlines the approval process for mining and petroleum activities by replacing the current process, which is considered unnecessarily onerous, with a clear step-by-step process from initial application through to decision stages. This amendment effectively replaces three chapters of the Environmental Protection Act with one simple, easy-to-follow chapter, deleting more than 90 pages of legislation in the process. These changes bring a number of additional benefits to the mining and petroleum industry including removing the requirement for an environmental management plan—which duplicated other application requirements—which is to be replaced with a clear list of requirements as part of the application for an environmental authority.

For small miners, the bill removes the requirement for a plan of operations for standard mining operations, previously known as level 2 mines, benefiting approximately 2,400 mining lessees. This will remove a 15-page administrative requirement for around 2,400 operators in Queensland. When you add it up, this means a total of 36,000 pages of red tape removed and a huge time and cost saving for operators.

The bill also streamlines the resource tenure and environmental authority approval process in alignment with the Streamlining Mining and Petroleum Approvals Project, led by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines. The environmental authority will now be linked to the resource tenure and will transfer automatically with the transfer of tenure. This will remove the need for transfer applications under the Environmental Protection Act, meaning over 250 applications per year will no longer be required. This represents a significant cost saving for businesses.

The money and time saved by these measures will benefit state and local government as well as Queensland businesses, all the while maintaining the state's high environmental standards. Up until now the mining and petroleum sector has experienced unnecessary duplicated steps in the application process and an excessive and unnecessary administrative burden on mining operators. For example, operators have been required to make multiple reports at different dates and have different management systems and training for each site to cope with the differing conditions. The streamlining of process achieved by this bill will be greatly welcomed by operators.

This bill introduces a new corporate licence system to replace numerous approvals with one corporate approval for all sites and environmental activities. I expect that both operators and regulators will breathe a sigh of relief when these new simplified and streamlined amendments come into force. The LNP government has made a commitment to reducing red tape, and this bill is another step in the right direction. It is clear that this kind of reform will be welcomed by an industry currently caught up in the bureaucratic processes of the past Labor government.

It is a good environmental outcome and business solution and this is what is important, not onerous and unnecessary administrative requirements and excessive fees. This bill is a good example of what can be achieved and the savings that can be made when a government is serious about working for its people. This bill is just good, common-sense thinking. I commend this bill to the House.