




Speech By
Julianne Gilbert

MEMBER FOR MACKAY

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WATER LEGISLATION (DAM SAFETY) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (6.45 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Water Legislation (Dam Safety) Amendment Bill 2016. I will make a short contribution to this debate because I believe it is important, after the weather events that we have seen around the state this year and in previous years, that we note the absolute power and destruction of fast-flowing water. This bill streamlines the process for the minister to declare a temporary full-supply level for a flood mitigation dam under the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008.

The power to declare a temporary full-supply level was first established in response to the recommendations of the Queensland Floods Commission of Inquiry interim report. It allows the minister to declare a temporary full-supply level for Wivenhoe Dam, Somerset Dam and North Pine Dam. They are currently the only prescribed dams that must have an approved flood mitigation manual for operating dams during floods.

The power to declare a temporary full-supply level has been used on a number of occasions since enacted. It is generally in the lead-up to the wet season to manage the potential impacts of floods in South-East Queensland. However, the current process set out in the legislation to declare a temporary full-supply level is prescriptive and time consuming.

The bill will streamline the process for the minister to declare a temporary full-supply level, but retains the existing criteria that the minister must have regard to in making a decision. These criteria include: the outcome of any consultation between the chief executive and the owner of the dam about the full-supply level of the dam; the extent to which the temporary full-supply level is likely to mitigate the impacts of a potential flood or drought; the impacts the temporary full-supply level will have on the water security of the dam; whether the temporary full-supply level would affect the safety of the dam; and any other positive or negative impacts of the temporary full-supply level that the minister considers relevant.

The new process will not change the current requirement for the minister to publish a declaration in the gazette as soon as practicable after making the decision, maintaining public disclosure of these important decisions. The bill will ensure that the decision can be made in a timely manner, while keeping the current checks and balances as well as transparency and accountability.

This is a simple and sensible change that will streamline processes and enable better management of flood mitigation dams. I applaud the minister and I commend the bill to the House.