




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

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FOREST WIND FARM DEVELOPMENT BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.05 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the Forest Wind Farm Development Bill 2020. The objective of the bill is to provide tenure within the Toolara, Tuan and Neerdie state forests to enable a proposed major renewable energy project for Queensland to occur. Under the current legislative framework, the Forestry Act 1959 prohibits the development of consistent and incompatible uses, including the grant of tenure for projects of this kind. Queensland state forests are permanently reserved for the production of timber and associated products and to protect the watershed therein.

The bill includes a number of provisions which exempt the development from or modify sections of the Forestry Act to allow the development to occur on state forest land. Forest Wind Holdings Pty Ltd submitted a detailed proposal under the investment facilitation process for exclusive transactions seeking to establish a large-scale wind farm with an estimated private capital investment of up to \$2 billion. The project is anticipated to deliver up to 1,200 megawatts of renewable energy from up to 226 wind turbines located in the Toolara, Tuan and Neerdie state forests. The proposed project area is also the subject of a current plantation licence. The plantation licence held by HQPlantations Pty Ltd commenced in 2020 and continues for a period for 99 years.

This bill is vital for Queensland, demonstrating the Palaszczuk government's commitment to renewable energy and job-creating opportunities for the future. Subject to completion of the project, wind energy from the project would represent 12 per cent of Queensland's installed generation capacity, which will significantly contribute to the Queensland government's target of generating 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. With a multibillion dollar capital cost, the project is also anticipated to yield significant economic benefits for Queensland, including the creation of up to 440 jobs in the construction phase and 50 operations jobs annually.

This bill establishes a legislative framework for the development to coexist with the plantation licence and to otherwise be undertaken in the state forest through exempting the project from certain provisions of the Forestry Act and the Land Act 1994. Without the introduction of the special purpose legislation, the development would not be able to proceed.

The bill was introduced into the Queensland parliament on 20 May this year by the Hon. Kate Jones, Minister for State Development, Tourism and Innovation, and referred to the State Development, Tourism, Innovation and Manufacturing Committee for examination. The committee invited submissions from the public and received 21 submissions in total. The committee received a public briefing about the bill from representatives of the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation and the planning group within Queensland Treasury. A public hearing was held in Brisbane on 15 June this year.

The committee handed its report back to parliament on 3 July 2020 and recommended that the bill be passed. A number of stakeholders outlined their support for the bill, largely due to the potential renewable energy generation and economic benefits for the region should the proposal proceed. I note that the Wide Bay Burnett Environment Council voiced their support by stating—

The bill proposes to provide tenure ... to enable a renewable energy project for the Wide Bay Burnett region to occur. WBBEC supports renewable energy projects in the region, for greenhouse gas reduction, sustainable economic development and local job creation.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the committee chair, the member for Stretton; committee members, the member for Jordan, the member for Noosa, the member for Scenic Rim and the member for Theodore; and the committee secretariat for all of their hard work throughout the committee process. I commend the bill to the House.