




Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**

**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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**GAS SUPPLY AND OTHER LEGISLATION (HYDROGEN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.48 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the Gas Supply and Other Legislation (Hydrogen Industry Development) Amendment Bill 2023. I would like to thank the committee members from both sides of the House for their consideration of the bill and the committee staff for their assistance. I note that there were five submissions to the bill from industry and interested parties. The APA Group, which was one of those submitters, is a group which has considerable infrastructure across my electorate. If you happen to go to a place like Wallumbilla, you will find that South Australian pipelines and Queensland pipelines all intersect at that particular place. They have a large amount of infrastructure across my electorate.

**Mr Stevens:** Where is Wallumbilla?

**Ms LEAHY:** I will take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Wallumbilla is a very important place in my electorate. You will find it just before you get to Roma.

There is considerable interest in hydrogen development in the world and potential investment opportunities in Queensland. Pipelines will be essential for hydrogen production and export. Pipelines could be critical infrastructure and they will be needed to facilitate the transportation of hydrogen and other gases to markets or large facilities; for example, transporting hydrogen from a production facility to an export terminal.

I have heard a lot about pipelines before, and I have lived through the coal seam gas industry when they were developing their pipelines from the Surat Basin to Gladstone, so I am particularly familiar with some of the things that happen when you are dealing with pipelines. Often these pipelines are quite significant infrastructure and it takes a lot of effort to ensure you have the corridors for them. The CSG/LNG pipelines are now in place, and the learnings from the development of the CSG industry need to be taken into account by government.

The Gas Supply and Other Legislation (Hydrogen Industry Development) Amendment Bill aims to provide a clear regulatory assessment pathway to authorise the construction and operation of pipelines for hydrogen and hydrogen carriers in Queensland. Hydrogen carriers include ammonia, methanol, methylcyclohexane, dimethyl-ether and toluene in pipelines.

In October 2022, energy ministers agreed to extend the national gas law and the national energy retail law to hydrogen and other renewable gases. This bill is intended to provide consistency with these national regulatory reforms. I do not know if members of the House have seen the map that shows where gas is moving around the country. There is a great graphic of that on the internet.

The objectives of the bill are to expand the Gas Supply Act jurisdiction to hydrogen, hydrogen blends, biomethane and other gases and to amend the Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004 to provide a clear and effective regulatory pathway for the proponent to apply for a pipeline licence

for the transmission of hydrogen and hydrogen carriers. This brings me to some of the issues raised in the submissions to the bill. In particular, the APA submission mentions the conversion of 43 kilometres of the Parmelia Gas Pipeline in Western Australia, the first 100 per cent hydrogen-ready transmission pipeline. They state that the pipeline was assessed as suitable for 100 per cent hydrogen service without any requirement to reduce the operating pressure of the pipeline; however, they do not mention what that particular pressure was in that pipeline. For the information of the House, not all pipelines are the same. Many of them operate on different pressures and they vary greatly depending on the use and depending on the collection and where they are operating in the actual project. It cannot be said that every pipeline will be easy to convert because some of them may not be.

APA state they have developed a pipeline screening tool that provides a high-level assessment of the hydrogen readiness of the pipeline assets based on key pipeline material and operating characteristics. This is particularly important for the conversion of any pipeline. I recall that a pipeline from Moonie to Brisbane in 2007 leaked oil onto industrial land in Brisbane. That pipeline was subsequently shut down following that incident. Pipeline screening is important to mitigate the risk not only to people but also to the environment.

APA also mentioned further legal issues that will need to be resolved on the conversion of existing property easements to carry gases other than natural gas. There will be an extensive amount of work to do. The hydrogen pipeline cannot be constructed and operated on private land unless an agreement is reached with the relevant landholders and the native title holders. That comment from the APA is also relevant to the other matters raised by AgForce in their submission. One of the most challenging issues for any new pipelines will be that of the development footprints. There are already many pipelines on public and private land, and I do not think there is one comprehensive map of all of them. AgForce point out that not infringing on landholder rights and delivering real protections for prime agricultural land and acceptable land access are all important issues. You have to have the regulatory framework in place before you go trying to provide licences for an energy project.

More specifically, AgForce states this relates to development footprints such as easements, pipeline corridors and alternative tenures. A preference for the use of state owned land over resumptions or impacts on privately owned or held land is sought by AgForce. I have had a lot of experience with that, particularly with the powerlines that we use to connect up a lot of the gas infrastructure across my electorate. They had a great preference for going through privately owned land because it was already cleared—

**Mrs Frecklington:** Which is what is happening now.

**Ms LEAHY:**—rather than going through forestry land, which is state owned land. I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. We should be using the state owned land and stock routes, which should form part of the infrastructure corridors, before we go onto private land. It is simply trying to take the cheaper option because private land is usually cleared land, whereas that which is the state owned land usually has vegetation on it which has to be cleared. It is often very much the cheaper option which is taken by many of these proponents.

There are existing developments and workforce fronts in planning and new industry developments in the CSG industry and also, I might mention, in relation to wind and solar projects. Do not underestimate how complex the development footprint currently is. There are existing roads, gas pipelines, wind turbines, water pipelines and gas infrastructure, just to name a few of the things that are out there in the regions where you will be wanting to develop the hydrogen type industries. The footprint is already very busy. The state owned land should be the first consideration rather than complicating the footprints on privately owned land.

AgForce state that the highest protections should be afforded for the safety and privacy of farmers and agricultural production in the first instance and, further, that amendments must ensure this outcome is secured. The minimising or limiting of unavoidable impacts on primary producers and agricultural productivity and production is particularly important. The agriculture industry will not be the immediate beneficiaries of new energy industries in relation to hydrogen or in relation to the wind turbines, but those particular individuals and their communities will have to deal with considerable disruption and the construction activities which sometimes are very difficult for small communities to manage.

AgForce state they also understand from the departmental briefing that environmental approval, regional interest development approval, RIDA, and native title processes will apply, as will existing land access and easement requirements. AgForce have recently raised several concerns with the existing land access system, including the RIDA process, within a submission to the Resource Industry Development Plan coexistence discussion paper. I urge the government to look very closely at what AgForce have said in relation to that RIDA process. Constituents have reported to me that the RIDA process in its current form is particularly onerous and needs significant improvement.

Privacy during infrastructure development, surveillance, monitoring, maintenance, ongoing weed control, animal welfare and disturbances—noise and dust—are all factors that landowners and adjacent landowners will have to deal with in terms of the new pipelines that will be proposed by the new energy industry of hydrogen. It is the government’s responsibility to ensure the regulatory environment meets the expectations of those communities that are impacted and that are most impacted during the construction period.