

Question on Notice

No. 984

Asked on Thursday, 22 August 2024

MR M BERKMAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF AND MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND INNOVATION (HON L LINARD)—

QUESTION:

With reference to coal seam gas (CSG) production in Queensland—

Will the Minister advise (a) are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as ‘forever chemicals’, used in coal seam gas drilling and/or maintenance operations and (b) if yes, (i) what specific chemicals are used, (ii) in what locations and under what circumstances are these substances currently used and (iii) what approximate quantities are used?

ANSWER:

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) is a ‘forever chemical’ that can persist in the environment for a long time, bioaccumulate in living organisms and is highly mobile in water and soils.

Queensland has led the nation in responding to PFAS risks, being the first State to begin phasing out PFAS firefighting foams, the first to regulate PFAS in biosolids and the first to place PFAS limits on compost to ensure that the health of Queenslanders and the environment are protected.

The Government is also working with State and Federal counterparts to implement legislation to limit the use of PFAS in a range of products.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation is not aware of PFAS being a component of fracking fluids used in Queensland.

Petroleum and gas tenure holders are required under the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004* to notify the Department of Resources and landholders before and after undertaking hydraulic fracturing activities. The notification must include details of the composition of the hydraulic fracturing fluid pumped into the petroleum well used for the activities.

An initial review by the Department of Resources into notifications of fracking fluids confirms advice received from industry that PFAS is not present in fracking fluids used in Queensland.

The Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is phasing out the use of certain PFAS chemicals from 1 July 2025. These controls, introduced under the Industrial Chemicals Environmental Management Standard, will restrict the import, export, manufacturing and use of certain PFAS chemicals.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation will continue to work across government and industry to respond to the emerging risks linked to PFAS.