



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove

Ref: CTS 21777/10



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

24 DEC 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 26 November 2010 to the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade, enclosing a copy of Petition No. 1453-10 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly. As the matter raised falls under my portfolio responsibilities, I will be providing a response.

The Petition draws to attention of the House the proposal of Northern Energy Corporation Limited to establish an open cut, coking, coal mine at Colton on land described as EPC1082 and EPC923 in the Parish of Wallieburn, located within the Fraser Coast Regional Council area.

The petitioners request the House to consider the impact that this proposed mine will have on the health and lifestyle of the residents of Aldershot, Dundathu, St Helens, Maryborough and surrounding areas, and the quality of air within this Fraser Coast district, which has a reputation, not only nationally but globally, as a pristine tourist friendly destination. The petitioners request that the Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Department of Mines and Energy vote against this mining lease proposal.

I am advised that the Department of Environment and Resource Management is currently assessing an application for an Environmental Authority for the proposed Colton Coal mining project. The department has assessed the Environmental Management Plan (EM Plan) and decided that it does not meet the content requirements as stipulated by the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (the Act). Northern Energy Corporation Limited now has up to 12 months to resubmit an amended EM Plan to fully address the content requirements.

The Act requires that potential environmental impacts such as dust emissions be addressed in the EM Plan, so that the environmental values of the area surrounding the proposed mine are protected. The department will also give consideration to the potential for coal dust to impact on human health and this will include consideration of any advice provided by Queensland Health.

The Act also requires that potential environmental impacts by releases from the proposed mine to water be addressed in the EM Plan. The coal mine proposal will need to demonstrate that the environmental values of any rivers receiving water from the proposed mine, including the Mary and Susan Rivers are protected.

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As a point of clarification, the mine operations, if approved, will be restricted to the mining leases applied for in relation to the project, and only exploration activities are permitted in the broader areas covered by the exploration permits EPC1082 and EPC923 mentioned in Petition No. 1453-10.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Tim Brain, Manager, Environmental Services, South East Region, of the department, on telephone 4121 1800.

Yours sincerely



Kate Jones MP
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability