

Swati Sharma - Re: Fw: Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline -Scone area

From: Swati Sharma
To: Ross Watson
Date: 20/10/2008 09:38
Subject: Re: Fw: Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline -Scone area

#25 Attached

Ross,

Your submission has been received and the concerns you have raised will be considered as part of the Department's assessment of the proposal.

Regards,
Swati.

Swati Sharma
Environmental Planning Officer
Major Infrastructure Assessments
Department of Planning
23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney NSW 2000
(GPO Box 39, Sydney NSW 2001)
phone: (02) 9228 6221
fax: (02) 9228 6355
email: swati.sharma@planning.nsw.gov.au

>>> "Ross Watson" <rwagric@hunterlink.net.au> 19/10/2008 22:48 >>>
Swati, just resending as I omitted to include application reference no on first email.

Regards
Ross Watson.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ross Watson
To: swati.sharma@planning.nsw.gov.au
Sent: Sunday, October 19, 2008 10:38 PM
Subject: Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline -Scone area

Swati,

please find attached our submission rejecting this proposal.
Can you please return email to acknowledge receipt of our report. Many Thanks
Ross Watson.

10th October 2008.

25

KALINDA
MIDDLEBROOK DRIVE
SCONE.NSW.2337.



Ross Watson
Agriculture
CONSULTING AGRONOMIST

**ATTENTION:
MINISTER FOR PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT
Via
SWATI SHARMA
QUEENSLAND HUNTER GAS PIPELINE SUBMISSIONS
MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENTS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
GPO BOX 39
SYDNEY.NSW.2001**

Dear Sir,

**Re: Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline –Middlebrook area near Scone
Application Reference No 06-0286**

In response to the release of the initial Environmental Assessment Report for Queensland Hunter Gas Pipeline at Scone on the 3rd October 2008 , we wish to advise you that this proposed gas pipeline, is marked to traverse the entire front of our property for approximately 1000 metres along Middlebrook Drive .Our property is located between Map Pipeline No 700-750. This pipeline will alienate a significant proportion of prime and high quality agricultural land, on our property. Based on the broadscale map in the report it appears that this pipeline will traverse a very large number of properties in the surrounding district and Hunter Region , which are also prime agricultural land which is intensively farmed or developed .

We totally reject this proposal through our property, for the following reasons and appeal to you to instruct the QHGP management to relocate the pipeline away from this area, so as we along with many hundreds of regional landholders will not be significantly and adversely impacted by this development proposal.

QHGP management have not consulted with landholders. Many landholders first heard of a gas pipeline traversing their property when a letter arrived advising of such an activity. This was a total shock to us along with many other landholders. They have not received overwhelming and full approval from landholders, as they have conveyed in the media and have conveyed at the Upper Hunter Council meeting. They have shown total disregard for landholders with their corporate arrogance. They have not responded to our earlier objections in writing, which appears to be their style. They will not discuss with landholders as a group. They continue to keep landholders “in the dark”.

Some of our specific objections we want noted

- **There has been a total lack of open and honest consultation with landholders impacted by this proposal. On this basis alone their proposal must be rejected.**
- **If this is to be a State Government endorsed project then the State Government should provide access on there many State owned lands.** For the State Government to reject the use of TSRs on the basis that they are some pristine habitat of native species is absolute rubbish. As a well respected agronomist in this region for over 25 years , I know for a fact that TSR in this and many other areas are often degraded pasture sites, or at best no better than the surrounding grazing lands. QHGP should be made to use the roadside or rail corridors already in place. Private landholders should not be forced to provide access to such private investment proposals.
- It would appear that the proposed pipeline route has been just drawn on a map to traverse the most direct route, with **absolutely no consideration or detailed consultation/ ground surveying with individual landholders.** We along with other landholders have requested a detailed local map showing the route of the pipeline through local landholders properties. **Despite repeated requests, no detailed property maps showing the proposed location of the pipeline in the district have been obtainable.** We suspect this is to prevent groups of landholders identifying other landholders impacted by this proposal, so as to minimize the risk of groups of disgruntled landholders combining in their

rejection of this proposal. There has been a deliberate effort to have a disjointed and haphazard consultation process to fragment the community. There has not been any decent community and landholder consultation, in this area, and we suspect in other areas. In fact we objected to the timing of their supposed local consultative meeting which was between 2-5 pm on the Friday afternoon , just before the October long weekend. This certainly limited most working landholders to attend, which one could easily conclude was their intention.

- **Currently, we understand that there is a proposal for a 30m easement to be placed along the full length (1000m) of the road frontage of our property.** It is acknowledged in their EA that this pipeline will leave a residual scar on the environment. We do not want such a scar on our beautiful property. This would severely reduce the aesthetic appeal and real estate value of our property.
- **The majority of our property, where the pipeline is currently proposed is Class 1 Prime Agricultural Land /Class 2 Agricultural Land (NSW DPI Classification) . Alienation of Prime and High Quality Agricultural land must be prevented** when there is vast amounts of lower class agricultural land in the nearby area where such a construction could be located. We have advised the QHGP of two alternative locations with less environmental and amenity impacts, with no response.
- **Much of this land being proposed for the pipeline in the Scone , Aberdeen and Muswellbrook area is Class 1 and Class 2 Agricultural land which support intensive agriculture .** Such land is often serviced by a network of underground asbestos and PVC irrigation mains , is intensively fenced, with many fences built for thoroughbred horses, sown to expensive highly productive and improved pastures and irrigated lucerne hay stands. The alienation and disturbance of such land must be prevented. There are less sensitive routes to follow in the region or in regions further west of this proposed location.
- **The land in this location is highly valued. We do not want pipeline installation and permanent pipeline corridor reducing the potential value and appeal of our property.** The placement of pipeline through our property will certainly massively lower our future land sale values. This area is rural residential area, with this proposed pipeline potentially impacting on all homes along Middlebrook Drive and like affected properties in the Scone area.

- **Our property was a degraded and rundown property prior to purchase in 2005. In this period we have intensively developed the property for our horse breeding and management business .** The location of a gas pipeline on this property would have a real and major negative impact on this equine business , due to the real and perceived risks of possible gas leaks and explosions, by prospective horse clients. *This pipeline would undoubtedly ruin our horse breeding and management business*
- **The proposed gas pipeline goes directly through our new 12 x 30 m machinery shed and our water storage tank systems !** What does this say about their attention to detail !! The possible relocation of this shed is not an option.
- *This shed contains my extensive range of farm contracting machinery which is operated out of this site on a daily basis.* The severe and real interruption to the accessibility of our property during the construction phase of this pipeline would have a massive negative impact on the income earning potential of my farm contracting business.
- **We operate a highly successful agricultural/agronomy consultancy business from our property at Middlebrook.** In addition to providing agronomic advice to a large network of clients in this and surrounding areas , **I also undertake agricultural field trials and contract research for leading agricultural companies on this property .** The proposed gas pipeline traverses through one of my existing field research trial sites which has ongoing research being undertaken. This property is utilized for a series of field trials and therefore this property can not be interfered with by such infrastructure as a gas pipeline. There are several locations on this property that have been committed to agribusiness companies in 2009 for trial sites. **This property is utilized by many companies as an agricultural research centre. Therefore, this scientific and agricultural research part of my business, can not be interfered with or have the potential to be influenced by any extraneous influences such as this pipeline.** Therefore the location of a gas pipeline on this property is not an option. This property is one of the few private agricultural research locations, providing information to Upper Hunter farmers. *The potential negative impact of this*

pipeline on this research would not be favourably received by the local community. This research also has National significance.

- **The placement of this pipeline also goes along a row of local residences and within 50-100 metres of homes. This is unacceptable.**
- **We are concerned with the cumulative impacts of such a development in the area.** We are already being threatened by an undesirable wind farm on the adjoining property, so we do not want this area to become some industrial thoroughfare. *We certainly do not want a gas pipeline at our front door and wind turbines at our back door.*
- **This property has been undergoing a massive farm redevelopment program** in pastures, infrastructure and fencing, which has added significant aesthetic appeal and value. The construction and permanent location of this pipeline will significantly detract from this work and expenditure.
- **The QHGP construction and installation phase would adversely affect and disrupt our daily operations, including our farm contracting business, as well as the movement of vehicles and machinery to and from our farm and consulting business.** We also operate a cattle trading operation through this property, where it is necessary for large cattle trucks to gain access to our cattle yards on a frequent basis.
- **Ongoing maintenance of the pipeline would be a continual inconvenience and interruption to our everyday life and businesses.**
- **There are a series of immediate, real and long term negative impacts created by this proposed gas pipeline, on our property and business activities, which justify its relocation away from this area.**
- **The extremely high standard of pastures we have established at the front of our property is a deliberate action, to reinforce to potential and existing clients that “we practice what we preach”, with producing the “best pastures” we can for this environment.** I know for a fact that QHG will not be able to fully replace the pasture to the extremely high standard we have achieved. The loss or downgrading of the pastures on our property could also adversely impact on our pasture agronomy consulting business.

As you will now realize this proposed gas pipeline, has been inappropriately placed in this location and should be relocated . As you will agree, there are many significant reasons why such a proposal can not proceed through this property.

It will adversely impact on us in several significant ways, including

- Permanent loss in intrinsic aesthetic appeal
- Loss of a 30m x 1000m easement along the frontage of our property.
- Drastic reduction in the current and future real estate value.
- Adverse impacts on our property and business image.
- Adverse impacts on our equine horse business.
- Adverse impacts on my agricultural research business.
- Adverse impact on my farm contracting and service business during the pipeline construction and installation.
- Lowering in land amenity
- Irreplaceable loss of high performance and high profile pastures.

We reject QHGP s proposal to traverse our property with this pipeline as it will seriously impact on us, economically, environmentally and aesthetically.

Therefore we do request that the Minister for the Environment and Planning, instruct the QHGP to relocate the pipeline away from this property and avoid the placement of this pipeline through prime and high quality agricultural land in the Hunter Region.. We believe there are several more suitable locations to consider.

Yours faithfully

Ross and Shirley Watson

Email – rwagric@hunterlink.net.au.