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Executive Director - Resource Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39,
Sydney NSW 2001

20th May 2016

Re: Submission to the Narrabri Gas Project Environmental Impact Statement

I write on behalf of Farmers for Climate Action to oppose the project and recommend the rejection of the proposed Santos coal seam gas project in the Pilliga Forest and surrounding farmlands near Narrabri. We call upon the NSW State Government to support Australian farmers and promote a sustainable future for the Narrabri region.

Farmers for Climate Action is deeply concerned that the proposed Narrabri Santos gas project will contribute to further changing our climate through the leakage of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

Farmers' reliability of production is already challenged and impacted by climate change. Recently compiled data from researchers at the Australian National University demonstrates that despite on-farm adaptation, climate change is already impacting on agricultural productivity across many of Australia's food producing regions.

The continually increasing production challenges caused by climate change mean that Australia must preserve and regenerate the valuable food and fibre producing lands currently under farm management. 40 percent of the wells for this proposed project are planned for the productive agricultural lands surrounding the Pilliga. Such infrastructure will inevitably lead to obstructions to production.

Potential damage to ecosystem services including healthy soils and access to safe ground water is a high concern for Farmers for Climate Action. Local and international studies demonstrate that contamination of underground aquifers poses a genuine risk to underground water supplies.

Farmers for Climate Action understands that many local primary producers and rural landholders have voiced opposition to this project and we urge the State Government to ensure that the voices of Australia's food and fibre producers are clearly heard throughout the decision making process.

While acknowledging that Coal Seam Gas exploration has previously been seen as a bridging fuel, the rapid improvements in reliability and affordability of renewable energy present a viable alternative for many regional areas.

Farmers for Climate Action calls upon the Department of Planning and Environment to reject the Santos application and instead throw strong support behind renewable energy in NSW as a viable alternative to continued expansion of coal seam gas exploration. Renewable energy offers significant benefits to rural communities and farmers, including employment without the negative environmental impacts associated with coal seam gas mining activities.

Farmers for Climate Action is a movement by farmers, for farmers calling for climate solutions and supporting farmers to adapt to changing climatic conditions. Our network of over 2,000 Australian farmers and industry leaders are drawn from a diverse array of agricultural industries and from both sides of politics. Farmers for Climate Action believe in preserving the viability of Australian agriculture for future generations of Australian farmers.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this submission in further detail.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verity Morgan-Schmidt', written in a cursive style.

Verity Morgan-Schmidt

CEO Farmers for Climate Action