

Attention: Stephen O'Donoghue
Major Planning Assessments
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
Sydney 2001

Subject: Objection to Cobbora Coal Project
Ref: Submission No. 10-0001

10th November 2012

Dear Sir,

I wish to strongly object to the proposed Cobbora Coal Project. The reasons are as follows:

1. It flies in the face of all the scientific evidence that points to carbon dioxide emissions as causing global warming. The carbon emissions causing global warming mainly come from coal fired power stations. The NSW government itself has pledged to reduce the state's carbon emissions, and yet this project will commit NSW to a minimum of 20 more years of carbon pollution. The emissions attributed to this project and the coal extracted will amount to more than 25 million tonnes per year for the next 20 years. Why are we trying to prop up aging coal fired power stations with cheap coal, just to negotiate a sale of the very same?
2. Committing ourselves to more carbon emissions is only going further to guarantee a greater sea level rise in the future. This sea level rise is going to cost the NSW government hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure in the future. As an example, the iconic Opera House will be more than likely under water within a century. Our children are going to have to pay for this folly. It is imperative that NSW looks at renewable sources of energy, instead of just looking out for the next 4 years or so of management.
3. This project is committing 3.4 billion dollars of taxpayer's money to something only to benefit corporate entities. This is a huge waste of scarce government funds, and should be directed to something that will benefit the community, not line corporate pockets. If money has to be spent in the energy sector, it should be spent on renewable energy. I understand that it will still cost the taxpayer if this doesn't go ahead, but the amount will be much less.
4. The amount of water that the project will draw from the Cudgegong River is unsustainable. The project will get high security water, which will mean that agriculture along the Cudgegong River will miss out in the dry times. You can't eat coal. How can a water licence be practically transferred from downstream where there are several rivers supplying the water to a single river that doesn't have the flow? The year 2010 was one of only 6 years in the past century where Mudgee received more than 1000mm of rainfall. This rainfall only raised the Windamere Dam level by 25%, a mere drop compared to what the Macquarie did to the Burrendong Dam during the same period. Most of the water of the downstream licence came from the Macquarie, not the Cudgegong. Then there are the losses incurred in transferring 3.3 gegalitres from the Windamere Dam downstream to the extraction point. It has been estimated that around one third of the release will be lost into underground aquifers, so more than 4 gegalitres will have to be released from the Windamere Dam, not the 3.3 gegalitres. The Cudgegong River doesn't have the flow rate to accommodate this huge extraction.

5. Any future development along the Cudgegong River that requires water will not be able to go ahead, as all of the water allocation from the river will have been used, and then some. This project will stifle future growth in the Mudgee region for decades to come.
6. Aboriginal artifacts and heritage sites are going to be destroyed by this project. We need to preserve these areas for future generations.
7. More than 1800 hectares of woodland will be destroyed by this project. Enough woodland has been destroyed by coal mines in the Mudgee region already. It's time this ended.

I challenge you to do a cost comparison of the total 50 year lifetime input costs between a coal fired power station and a solar thermal power station with heat storage. You will find that the lifetime cost of a solar thermal power station is around half that of a coal fired power station even with cheap coal, because once the solar thermal power station is built, there are very few further input costs, whereas the coal fired power stations needs to be continually fed coal.

Mike Baird, the NSW treasurer, declared that this was a huge waste of taxpayer's money when he was in opposition. That is still the case. This project should be rejected on environmental, monetary and sensibility grounds. The money saved should be directed towards renewable energy.

Yours sincerely,