



PEOPLE FOR
THE ETHICAL
TREATMENT
OF ANIMALS

Australia

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Jeffrey Peng
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Via e-mail: Jeffrey.peng@planning.nsw.gov.au

1 February, 2022

Re: Objection to Grenfell Poultry Breeder Farm SSD-13855453

Dear Mr Peng,

I am writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) with regard to major project application SSD-13855453, which seeks permission for the construction and operation of 40 poultry sheds to house 570,000 birds at 1130 Gooloogong Road, Grenfell.

Please see the attached petition outlining the concerns of PETA Australia and 4,227 supporting signatories in relation to the proposed facility. Please do not publish the contact information of the petitioners within, including their email and street addresses.

Thank you in advance for reading the submission. We look forward to hearing from you regarding this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Weyman-Jones
PETA Australia
laurawj@peta.org.au

Affiliates

- PETA US
- PETA Asia
- PETA India
- PETA France
- PETA Germany
- PETA Netherlands
- PETA Foundation (UK)

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Re: Grenfell Poultry Breeder Farm SSD-13855453

Dear Mr Peng:

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) in relation to major project application SSD-13855453, which seeks permission for the construction and operation of 40 poultry sheds to house 570,000 birds at 1130 Gooloogong Road, Grenfell.

We object to this proposal for the following reasons:

Water Use

The proposed development would require 1 million litres of water per day from the Gooloogong–Grenfell Water Pipeline. Water scarcity is a persistent issue in Australia, and like all forms of animal agriculture, poultry farming is a thirsty industry. Chicken flesh requires over 1.5 times more water per gram of protein than pulses to produce, according to the Water Footprint Network. Planning to expand such operations in an area so susceptible to droughts is senseless. Water is essential to life – eating chicken is not.

Clearing of Native Vegetation

If these plans went ahead, approximately 1.17 hectares of box gum grassy woodland would be cleared, comprising 0.09 hectares of woodland and 1.08 hectares of native grassland. A further 0.21 hectares of fuzzy box woodland would also be removed. The clearing of these areas is considered to have “serious and irreversible impacts”. The direct impact of the development would be a total loss of 1.42 hectares of native vegetation.

Disturbance of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

The site is home to an Aboriginal cultural heritage site, near Wallah Wallah Creek, which intersects the property. The area is located within the impact footprint of the proposed access track and would be partially affected by the project.

Visual Impact

Issues concerning visual impact were raised by one nearby landholder during consultation. While a landscape buffer has been proposed to help mitigate this visual impact for the neighbour, such a buffer would take time to mature and grow large enough to conceal the huge structure, as the tallest silos would be 7.6 metres.

Zoonotic Disease Risk

Constructing more intensive poultry sheds while Australia continues to grapple with COVID-19 would be irresponsible. Much like COVID-19, bird flu is a zoonotic disease, and the Australian poultry industry has experienced several outbreaks of it – one as recently as 2020. According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 75% of recently emerged infectious diseases affecting humans began as diseases in animals. Such an outbreak would affect not only the human population but also local native bird populations.

Baiada's waste management plan does not deal properly with this eventuality, other than to say that diseased birds would be removed for processing, rendering, or disposal. The report fails to specify which slaughterhouse and authorised landfill birds would be taken to in this event or how their transport would be managed in order to stop the spread of disease. In the event of such an outbreak, more than half a million birds would need to be killed and disposed of – a matter that needs more serious consideration.

Odour

Ammonia gas – commonly emitted from poultry farms – has a sharp and pungent odour and can act as an irritant when present in elevated concentrations, as it would be around a facility housing 570,000 birds.

Flies and Rats

Flies are an additional common concern for residents living near poultry facilities. Research conducted by the Ohio Department of Health indicated that residences that were located within 800 metres of poultry facilities had 83 times the average number of flies. While the nearest rural dwelling is 1.5 kilometres from the closest poultry shed in the proposed development, the impact could still be considerable. Rats are also associated with poultry production and can be a vector for disease transmission.

Hazardous Materials

A screening assessment of the dangerous goods to be stored on site found that the bulk storage of liquefied petroleum gas (a class 2.1 flammable gas) would exceed the storage thresholds listed in the State Environmental Planning Policies, so the site would be regarded as potentially hazardous.

Animal Welfare

Chickens are intelligent, social animals, who feel pain and distress. In 2019, a PETA exposé of Baiada – the proponent of the Grenfell proposal – found widespread cruelty in its breeding facility and abattoir. Despite the presence of CCTV cameras at the abattoir,

workers punched chickens in the head and bashed them against metal railings before shackling them by the legs. One worker told the eyewitness that he would “just start smashing birds”. The eyewitness saw another worker repeatedly tearing birds’ heads off – and even putting a severed head on his finger and wiggling it about like a finger puppet.

Weddin Local Environmental Plan

The proposed site is a primary production zone. According to the Weddin Local Environmental Plan 2011, the objectives of the zone are, most notably, as follows:

- To encourage sustainable primary industry production by maintaining and enhancing the natural resource base
- To encourage diversity in primary industry enterprises and systems appropriate for the area

There is nothing sustainable or diverse about cramming half a million non-native birds into sheds on the site. While the project would provide 50 people with employment, this is nowhere near enough incentive to overlook the catastrophic damage it would cause to residents in the area, the environment, and the animals in warehouses.

We hope you’ll take our objections, along with the comments made by local residents, into account when making a decision on this application.

Yours sincerely,

PETA Australia and signatories (full list below).