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30 September 2016

Director – Resource Assessments
Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Rocky Hill Coal Project – Application Number SSD-5156
Stratford Coal Extension Project – Application Number SSD-4966 MOD1

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am opposed to the Rocky Hill Coal Project and the Stratford Mine Modification. If approved, the open-cut coal mine would be detrimental to the scenic natural environment of the Gloucester Valley.

Depriving the local tourism and agricultural industries over its minimum 20 year design life, the proposed mine would cause permanent damage to the local economy, reduce the value of at least 3,000 residential properties and create irreversible social change.

I moved my family and engineering consulting business to Gloucester 18 months ago and my house and office are within 3.5km of the proposed mine. If approved, an open-cut mine would expose my family to unacceptable health risks by way of coal dust, operational noise and light nuisance and reduce my ability to concentrate on my work.

Should the Department decide to consider the importance of the Rocky Hill Coal Project and Stratford Coal Extension Project more highly than the health and prosperity of existing local people and industries, I would like the following matters to be resolved:

1. I am concerned for the health of my community if the mine were to proceed. I understand the Emergency Department and Mortality rates per population at Singleton and Muswellbrook are significantly higher than those experienced in Sydney. If residents choose not to live in a mining environment which has been created around them against their will, there should be compensation and support available to assist with relocation.
2. It is understood there is a risk of polluting nearby rural residential drinking water tanks, as well as the Avon River system (which feeds into the Manning River and provides drinking water to a large human and animal population) due to the proposed location of the mine relative to Q100 flood levels, the uncovered coal stockpiles, wind erosion and seepage of contaminants from the overburden. The proposed operations of the mine will need to be amended to better control these risks using isolation and engineered methods.
3. I understand that the background noise levels assumed for Gloucester in the Applicant's Environmental Impact Statement was 30dBA but that Gloucester usually has only 24-26dBA background noise levels. I also understand the potential for low frequency noise from the mine operations has not been considered, but that previous experience suggests it is worse than high frequency noise due to its constancy and nature and that it pervades even 5km or more from the source. Given there the number of sensitive land uses and residences less than 5km from the proposed mine it is necessary for the noise assessment to be reviewed.
4. An independent air pollution monitoring system would be required with the results freely available to the public at all times.
5. Choose the operating hours and stick to them for the life of the project. Limiting hours for just three years provides no certainty to residents over the long-term.
6. Create a management plan which adequately addresses the fire hazard risk. We do not want another Morwell fire left burning for 45 days.

These two applications should be refused.

Yours sincerely

I have not made a reportable political donation.