

NSW Government Planning & Infrastructure

GPO Box 39

SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Director Mining and Industry Projects
Re: Watermark Coal Mine
App No.: SSD – 4975, Watermark Coal Project

Name: Bruce and Gail Taber
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Disclose reportable donations: I have made a reportable political donation No

Privacy Statement: I have read the Department's Privacy Statement and agree to the Department using my submission in the ways it describes. I understand this includes full publication on the Department's website of my submission, any attachments, and any of my personal information in those documents, and possible supply to third parties such as state agencies, local government and the proponent. I agree to the above statement? Yes

We are residents of Breeza and we object to the proposed Shenhua Watermark Coal Mine at Breeza NSW. We are opposed to the Shenhua Watermark Coal Mine as we are very concerned that the water quality and quantity will be affected by the proposed mine not only in Breeza but the whole of the great artesian basin. We cannot support the approval of the project when there is such a risk to the bore water as this is our main water source and purchasing additional rain water tanks will not be affordable. We are also concerned about the coal dust pollutants that will end up in the rain water supply. I am concerned the dust and noise from the mine will affect the health of the Breeza residents and the lifestyle that we all currently enjoy. As a sufferer of hay fever from dust we anticipate that this problem will become worse. Whatever information Shenhua gives us is a sales pitch "all will be rosy with no impacts" but this will not be the case as there will be increased noise and dust therefore the mine at Breeza will do nothing for us except for make our life more difficult.

I feel very strongly that the Government should not have allowed the prime farmland around Breeza to be sold for the purpose of mining. This area is one of Australia's if not the world's highest food producing areas and for the land to be sold to a Chinese company predominantly owned by the Chinese Government is ludicrous. There are so many people starving around the world and we are losing food producing land to mining. It appears that the decision makers forget that we can't eat coal. Future generations will be affected if we make poor decisions and to approve a mine in this area is certainly a very poor decision.

I have many friends that grow cotton. The quality of the cotton will be affected by the coal dust.

This project will have significant impact on the Breeza community and region. Some of these impacts include:

1. Air quality – We strongly disagree with the Shenhua air quality modelling results because the village is west of the area to be mined and our prevailing winds and storm paths are westerly. To my knowledge Shenhua based its modelling on a single dust monitor situated on the east side of the Breeza hill just inside the village boundary. The assessment does not give an accurate indication of wind and storm born particulate fallout. This is unacceptable. Further studies need to be carried out with extra monitors placed in and around the village before mining commences.

2. Health – the adverse effects of mining on the health of populations close to the mine sites has been documented and yet no study done on the health of the people of Breeza. Given that we are so close to the proposed mine site and the risk to our health is great there needs to be a health monitoring program agreed to by Shenhua and the Government before mining commences. We need a guarantee of compensation in case of a worst case scenario event.

3. Water – there is a high risk of coal dust contamination to the rain water tanks in Breeza. This is the only source of household water for most of the residences in the village. There are no contingency plans in place either by the Government or Shenhua if this was to occur. A water supply plan must be agreed by the Government, Shenhua and the residents of Breeza before mining commences.

There is a risk of contaminated water being released from the sediment dam during rainfall events where it exceeds the capacity. With the unpredictable rainfall events this situation is considered most probable and the releasing of contaminated water across the black soil plains and into our ground water systems is unacceptable.

It is stated in the proposal that:

- there is a potential for the reduction of catchment flows to surrounding waterways including the Mooki River, Watermark Gully, Native Dog Gully and Lake Goran with 25% loss at Watermark
- groundwater levels are predicted to largely recover rapidly
- a reduced rate of upward flow from the Permian to the alluvium is predicted

These predictions and forecasts by the Proponent are of great concern to our community.

4. Blast Damage – the adverse effects of underground tremors known as the ripple effect to damage residential structure, graves and head stones has been known to occur at other mine sites. To my knowledge there are no contingency plans in place if such an event should occur in Breeza. We need a guarantee from Shenhua that monitors will be placed around the village and if damage occurs because of blasting Shenhua will meet all cost involved to repair all structures, graves and headstones. Our house is built on a cement slab located on the side of a hill therefore we are most concerned about the potential structural damage to the building caused by blasting and ripples making it unsafe and worthless. We are proud of our town. The Progress Association has worked hard on improving the facilities including the cemetery. We want to be buried at Breeza, however we are concerned about the damage the blasting will do to the existing headstones and graves.

5. Koala - the Australian Koala Foundation (AKF) disputes the number of koalas located in the local government area and feel there are a lot less than stated. AKF are opposed to the translocation of the koalas from the Shenhua area.

6. Ecology - A total of 4,084 ha of vegetation will be removed progressively over the life of the project. This is a very large loss of vegetation and most certainly not allowed under any circumstances.

7. Future Expansion – It is stated in the EIS that a final void will remain in the Western Mining Area and will cover an area of approx. 100 hectares. It will have a maximum depth of 80 metres below the natural ground surface. This is the outcome that is recommended by the mining company as it is the most cost effective method plus it allows opportunity for access to coal resources. This raises concerns for our community as we are not talking about a one off mine but an opportunity for future expansion with further risk to water resources, agricultural land and people's health.

8. Noise – the proposed mine is located near the village of Breeza in Northern NSW which is a quiet rural area. Infrasound/low frequency noise (ILFN) produced by machinery is known to be a problem in these types of areas due to the lack of background noise. ILFN is known to cause cardiovascular disorders, psychological problems and stress. It is of great concern to the community that Shenhua is not completing any assessment on low frequency noise as stated in the EIS "Acoustics Impact Assessment 4.6 Low Frequency Noise - no separate assessment of low frequency noise levels is required".

9. Heritage - The project will destroy significant Aboriginal heritage sites. The relocation of any significant object from its natural environment is not recommended due to the potential damage that can occur.

10. Increased Train Movement - All towns and properties along the rail line will be impacted by additional noise and dust from increased coal train movements.

11. Employment – at a recent public meeting Shenhua representatives stated that they do not use a fly in fly out workforce and that they will employ locals from Breeza. We were insulted by this comment as we are now retired having raised 5 children who we might add are all in the workforce. The majority of Breeza residents are retired therefore this comment demonstrates the lack of knowledge and interest Shenhua have in the local community.

If the Government approves this project, they are knowingly approving the detrimental impacts of this mine at the cost of the landholders and the community. Once the mine starts, you cannot stop or mitigate the impacts to the water resources, the system enters a new state and is changed.

Bruce and Gail Taber

“The Terrace”

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