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19 June 2017

Executive Director
Resource Assessments and Business Systems Planning Services
Department of Planning and Environment
GPO Box 39
Sydney NSW 2001

Hume Coal Mine Project EIS SSD 15_7172

Dear Executive Director,

I wish to object to the above project covering mining in the Southern Highlands and recommend that it be rejected. This area is an extremely valuable part of NSW with pristine heritage assets. Farming and tourism are extremely valuable for supporting the local economy and these could be irreversibly destroyed by this proposal.

I own and operate a cattle raising farm at Exeter and I have two water bores. Underground water is extremely important. In some seasons the Southern Highlands is well supplied with rainwater but there are many times, as has been witnessed over the last 5 to 10 years, when the rain is either irregular or falls at the wrong time for pasture growth. I am assured by experts, based on their previous experience, that mining would reduce the water table and in fact might cause some bores to dry up, possibly permanently.

A further concern is that wastewater which is to be pumped back underground could seriously contaminate the underground water and make it unusable. A reliable source of clean potable water is a very important major requirement for the farmers, as well as for the business operators and the residents.

There are a number of other objections which others will also advise. Transport of the coal by rail or truck on a 24 hour seven day a week basis will create noise, pollution, road congestion and reduced safety for the residents and tourists. There will be dust from the operation and the coal trains. Air pollution from dust and diesel fumes will have a health effect on the residents and others in the area. It will also significantly impact on tourism with a significant reduction in their numbers. That would have a very adverse effect on the local businesses and therefore the local economy.

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An important issue which cannot be overlooked is that the area is part of the Sydney Water catchment area. There is the likelihood that polluted water would feed into the local streams and creeks and then into the Sydney water supply.

In summary, it should be remembered that the applicant is a foreign company who has come to Australia to make money. When the resource is exhausted they will leave with their takings and NSW would be left with an area that is currently one of the most beautiful and valuable parts of NSW, ruined.

I strongly recommend that the government reject the application in its entirety.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'E Robert Y Smith'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

E Robert Y Smith

Note I have no objection to this letter being included on the Department's website and I declare that I have not made any reportable political donations in the previous two years.