12 September 2014

Director - Infrastructure Projects
Department of Planning and Environment
Number: SSI 13_6136
Major Projects Assessment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Via online form:
http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6136

NorthConnex Application Number: SSI 13_6136

In response to the exhibition of the EIS for NorthConnex, I am submitting the following for consideration.

I **object** to the project as described in the EIS.

Whilst I purchased my house in close proximity to a freeway, in full knowledge of that fact, I never anticipated that there would be an exhaust stack and exit portal for 9 kilometres of tunnel, within 100 metres from my home's location in Fern Ave Wahroonga. With clear visibility of the proposed items in clear view of the front of my house and master bedroom, and only a road between us, it raises a number of concerns, which I do not believe have been addressed adequately by the Northconnex project team.

These concerns include the following:

1. Placement of the northern ventilation stack in a residential area near many residents, many of them elderly and children at the many nearby schools. Chosen I believe due to the cost factor, this requires minimal purchase of adjacent properties and negates the need for a longer tunnel.
2. Failure to consider the alternative option and potential additional cost of extending the tunnel to the industrial area less than 2 kilometres north, to an industrial area, where substantial amounts of land are already held by the RTA.
3. The geography of the valley the proposed stack is in and the low height of the stack seems to have not taken into consideration the local conditions that include high trees, frequent low cloud, inversion layers and very light winds.
4. Modelling being based on weather data, from an area that has a completely different topography than Wahroonga. As we are effectively in a valley, weather data on behaviour of potential exhaust spewed into Terrey Hills or Penrith will produce a completely different outcome, as they are unlikely to suffer from inversion layers.
5. Data used to predict air quality in the tunnel, also failed to consider that the air entering the tunnel is polluted air from a motorway, so has an incorrect base level.
6. Modeling that did not take into account severe events such as fires in the tunnel or accidents that stop the traffic, modeling was done on best-case

scenarios and averages. The local community will have to live with the consequents of “non average” events. As airports and other major transport “sites” must base their outcomes on worst case scenario, why does a 9 kilometre tunnel, which will impact many more individuals daily, not have to also apply those considerations.

7. Portal emissions are of major concern to us, being so close to the exit portal. Whilst there is no anticipation of there being any emissions, as we have seen with other tunnel projects, expectations have differed greatly from the actual, once the tunnels were in use. Again, there needs to be a back up, in case portal emissions occur, as these have been purported to be highly toxic. The only fail safe way to ensure these are not pushed into a residential area is to move the portal to an area that is NOT residential.
8. Monitoring of emissions and air quality, paid for by the tunnel provider, cannot be considered as independant.
9. Traffic modeling is based on the improved efficiency of vehicles on the road but seems to ignore the well-established trend in Australia of more vehicles being diesel powered. Diesel fumes and the fine particles in that pose some of the most serious health risks to the community. Again the base data is making assumptions that could be seriously wrong should this trend to diesel vehicle continue or accelerate.
10. Transurban’s attempts to imply that Wahroonga is similar in location to a tunnel placed by the harbor bridge is completely misleading, as are many of the plans, showing areas around our house as large, clearly non-residential, when there is nothing but houses.
11. There was little consideration given to filtration on the basis it didn’t improve air quality inside the tunnel and was expensive.
12. Repeated requests for examples from overseas where similar technology had been applied to tunnels of similar length, failed to produce any response. It appears this proposal is unique and is not taking using a proven operating designs.

To address my concerns I request that the following actions are undertaken:

1. Consideration is given to the cost of extending the tunnel to the northerly industrial area and how those costs could be absorbed in the tolls or provded for in other ways.
2. Community concerns about health issues associated with the placement of the Portal and Ventilation shaft are addressed.
3. Consideration is given for independent option assessment for different designs that move the portal and stack to a non-residential area.
4. That there is an independent review of the benefits of filtration to air quality and health of the residents near the exhaust stack and portal.
5. An independent review of the ventilation system is undertaken to ensure that NorthConnex’s claim of no portal emissions is justified.
6. Data is collected using correct base levels for air quality in the tunnel
7. Data is collected for weather patterns in Wahroonga and applied against stack emissions modeling.
8. Portal emissions are given a no tolerance level and high fines are levied for failure to comply.

9. A long-term health study on children and residents in areas impacted by stack discharges be included as part of the conditions of approval.
10. Consideration is given to providing some assistance (stamp duty relief) to residents who own homes within 200 metres of the Portal who have moved since the proposal was announced or do move prior to the tunnel being completed.

Regards

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