



MACQUARIE LINKS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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To:
Mining and Industry Projects
Department of Planning
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Camden Gas Project Stage 3, Project Application 09_0048

The Macquarie Links Community Association comprising over 400 residences, has voted at an Executive Meeting on 11 December 2012, to express the Community's objection to AGL's project application 09_0048 to mine for coal seam gas (CSG) in Campbelltown and Camden and including part of Macquarie Links Estate.

The key reasons for our objection are stated below:

1. According to the map provided with the application, the underground mining area encloses part of the Macquarie Links Community including various Neighbourhood properties and parts of the golf course within the estate, DP270512, copy of overlap with Macquarie Links Estate attached as Appendix A. It appears that Stages 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, Peak Villas, Peak apartments, Lot 36, parts of Lot 1 Community land and Lot 2 golf course fairways Nos 3 & 4 (and possibly 5 and 6). This encompasses more than 60% of the residential estate.
2. We are concerned that CSG mining is a technologically-evolving industry whose impacts have not been independently and scientifically fully researched. This view is supported by professional organisations and academics in evidence to the NSW Upper House and Senate Inquiries into Coal Seam Gas Mining in 2011 and by subsequent research here and overseas. We have had to rely on the industry for much of our information when the industry has a vested interest in the outcome. AGL is no different. It claims that the Camden Gas Project has been safely operating for 10 years. Yet we understand that impacts on groundwater and air quality have not been adequately monitored, and while AGL has been operating under an Environmental Protection Licence (EPL No. 12003), it has been allowed to self-monitor its compliance, self-investigate incidents and self-report, such that we do not know what true impacts it may be having.
3. We are deeply concerned that the costs of unforeseen problems will be borne by the community and taxpayers after AGL is long gone from the area. This is unacceptable.
4. Doctors for the Environment Australia claim that health impacts from CSG mining have not been assessed. Preliminary research from Queensland (e.g. by Southern Cross University in Tara) and overseas is deeply concerning, especially where fracking has been used. As at December 2011, 85% of the production wells in the Camden Gas Project had been fracked (evidence from the NSW Upper House Inquiry) with inadequate monitoring of its impacts on water in particular. AGL claims that the use of horizontal wells in the proposed Stage 3 will

reduce the need for fracking, but it seems that this is not entirely true since it has reserved the right to frack these wells in the future if/when the technology becomes available. The size of the proposed well clusters and any fracking of horizontal wells are both new and untested here. It will therefore be entirely experimental with unknown outcomes on health and property including the possibility of subsidence under so many urban properties.

5. We are also concerned about evidence from Queensland and overseas on air quality and the cumulative impact of AGL's expansion into an area that already experiences incidents of unacceptable levels of air pollution (ozone and fine particles) associated with respiratory problems (NSW Environmental Protection Authority).

6. Allowing CSG mining in areas that are not zoned for heavy industry undermines zoning controls and confidence in the planning process, and creates severe land use conflicts, economic instability and inequity. It is unsightly and unsafe in urban areas with a potential escalation in CSG mining incidents and accidents associated with the more intense urban activity (traffic, people etc.), the presence of children, and potential for vandalism. The consequent impact on land and house values for existing land and home owners may be devastating. For many people the home is their largest asset and is often leveraged to support small business. Any devaluation by bank assessors may destroy livelihoods and life savings.

7. We do not believe that the NSW Government's new regulations for CSG mining will ensure its safe operation here. As the only commercially producing CSG field in NSW, the Camden Gas Project has already been operating under consent conditions. Yet the NSW Government has not been able to ensure compliance, as evidenced by on-going breaches by AGL of its licence conditions, and the discovery of incidents that might not have been reported were it not for community vigilance, such as the Sugarloaf well incident in May 2011 in Menangle that allowed well contents to drift over Sydney's water channel and to nearby Glen Alpine houses. The proposal poses risks to Sydney's water in general and to the South West in particular that have not been adequately assessed.

8. AGL will only ever produce about 5% of NSW's gas from the Camden Gas Project according to evidence it gave under oath at the NSW Upper House Inquiry. This does not justify the risks and potential costs to the community, particularly since 150,000+ people already live and work in the immediate affected area in Sydney's south west growth corridor.

9. Other Environmental issues of concern relate to our understanding based on the findings of the City University of New York - Graduate Center, which state that the emerging movements against fracking, and the science that informs them, raise two key concerns as follows:

i) First, how much damage is being done to water wells and underground aquifers from methane migration and the chemicals mixed with water and then injected into fracking wells under high pressure? You might call this the "flaming faucet" question, and it has understandably and rightly galvanized many of the local people fighting fracking. The industry claims that there's no problem—that the cement casings they put in the wells keep the chemicals out of layers of soil where drinking water might be found....

Preliminary research from Duke University seemed to indicate that indeed methane was showing up in drinking water; in December, the EPA released its first thorough study, conducted in the Wyoming town of Pavilion, where residents had reported brown, undrinkable water after nearby fracking operations. The EPA concluded that the presence in the water of synthetic compounds such as glycol ethers and the assortment of "other organic components" were "the result of direct mixing of hydraulic fracking fluids with ground water," and told local residents to stop drinking from their wells....

The evidence from Pavilion was a powerful indictment of the industry, and it led several leading doctors to call for a moratorium on fracking pending more health research. "We don't have a great handle on the toxicology of fracking chemicals," said Vikas Kapil, chief medical officer at the National Center for Environmental Health, an arm of the Centers for Disease Control. Recently a magnitude 4.0 earthquake in Youngstown, Ohio, was blamed on the injection of high-pressure fracking water along a seismic fault, a phenomenon also documented in Arkansas and Oklahoma.

ii) A second concern has to do with the damage being done to rivers and streams—and the water supply for homes and industries—by the briny soup that pours out of the fracking wells in large volume. Most of the chemical-laced slick water injected down the well will stay belowground, but for every million gallons, 200,000 to 400,000 gallons will be regurgitated back to the surface, bringing with it, McGraw writes, "...not only the chemicals it included in the first place, but traces of the oil-laced drilling mud, and all the other noxious stuff that was already trapped down there in the rock: iron and chromium, radium and salt—lots of salt."

For the above reasons the Macquarie Links Community strongly objects to the expansion of Coal Seam Gas mining in the Campbelltown/Camden area and particularly the inclusion of Macquarie Links estate in the zone for mining. Coal Seam Gas mining is socially, environmentally and economically unjustified, and has no social licence to operate here.

I acknowledge that my name will appear on my submission when publicly exhibited.

Yours sincerely

Gary Camp
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for and on behalf of, Macquarie Links Community
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