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GLENDELL CONTINUED OPERATIONS PROJECT 'OBJECTION'

I'm writing to object to the Glendell Continued Operations Project mine proposal.

Cumulative impacts on the Hunter Valley:

- The cumulative impacts of all mines operating in the Hunter Valley have not been adequately accounted for by the New South Wales government; and have now reached an untenable point - for water systems, for the conservation of native fauna and their habitats, for native vegetation conservation, and for the remaining people in communities within the Upper Hunter mine zone.
- The people of the Hunter do not want their land and home to be a sacrifice zone for an outdated sector that should be urgently replaced – for the sake of both our communities and workers.

Climate change:

- On the back of the unprecedented fires that Australia has just experienced, it is reckless to be approving new coal mines. The severity and massive scale of these fires is understood by science to be due to human induced climate change ¹.
- 350 to 360 parts per million CO2 equivalent is understood to be the benchmark for the stability of Earth's climate that has been recorded for millennia. Yet the atmosphere of Earth has been forced past 412 parts per million CO2 equivalent greenhouse gas emissions - and is rapidly escalating ².
- Meanwhile the proponent proposes to mine a quantity of coal that would emit an estimated 230.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gases – contributing an unacceptable quantity of pollution at a time it should be rapidly drawn down and removed from the atmosphere.
- Ongoing temperature analysis conducted by scientists at NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies (GISS) shows the average global temperature on Earth has increased by well over 1 degree Celsius since pre-industrial times.
- This project is consistent with the IPCC's high emissions climate scenario which would see Earth warm by over 3.4C this century. This is unacceptable. Especially after then climate reality-check of the Australian fires of 2019-2020.
- Deliberately tracking for 3+C degrees as the proponent proposes is clearly not moral or justified.
- We cannot afford to keep adding to the accumulated carbon in the atmosphere by digging and mining more coal. Short-term jobs and mining royalties can in no way justify immediate and escalating climate change devastation.

Species extinction:

- Prior to the catastrophic fire season, Australian scientists had already declared that we are amid an extinction crisis for Australian wildlife. “A national disgrace”.³
- All native species have been pushed to the brink of survival – even the Australian icon Koala listed above. Each of the above species deserve the right to survival.
- The Department of the Environment and Energy (DoEE) considers that there is “likely or potential to be a significant impact on the following entities:
 - Central Hunter Valley Eucalypt Forest and Woodland ecological community – critically endangered
 - Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera Phrygia*) – critically endangered
 - Swift Parrot (*Lathamus discolor*) – critically endangered
 - The Green and Golden Bell Frog (*Litoria aurea*) – vulnerable
 - Spotted-tailed Quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus maculatus*) – endangered
 - Large-eared Pied Bat (*Chalinolobus dwyeri*) – vulnerable
 - Koala (*Phascolarctos cinereus*) (combined populations of Qld, NSW and the ACT) – vulnerable
 - New Holland Mouse (*Pseudomys novaehollandiae*) – vulnerable
 - Grey-headed Flying-fox (*Pteropus poliocephalus*) – vulnerable
 - Trailing Woodruff (*Asperula asthenes*) – vulnerable”
- The project report was written prior to this catastrophic fire season which saw massive losses of wildlife (a billion creatures) and flora. It is certain that the prospects for the survival of all of the above species have been significantly reduced. Without protective action (ie. no more habitat loss from land clearing/mining) extinction is in high likelihood.
- Habitat for all of the species above should be fully protected in light of the fires of 2019-20 and the future fires to come as Australia becomes hotter and drier.

Water:

- I am very concerned about the cumulative impact of underground mining on the connected underground water aquifers and the over-stressed Hunter River.
- The mine’s groundwater assessment shows that dramatic drawdown of the coal seam under the Bowman’s Creek alluvium propagates upward into the alluvium and causes drawdown and loss of surface water. This adds to stress already being experienced in the area from other mines, and the groundwater assessment also shows cumulative draw down of over 2 meters in the alluvium during the proposed mining operations.
- This impact is unacceptable – especially on the back of prolonged drought and water restrictions in the Hunter Valley throughout 2018 to today.

Economic assessment:

- In recent months investment funds across the world have been dumping coal investments.^{4, 5}
- This is the start of a global trend and only a matter of time before this hits the Hunter Valley. We need to immediately prepare for this seismic economic change - not further entrench the outdated and risky fossil fuel sector.
- It is not acceptable to leave workers and an entire regional economy exposed to an entrenched and outdated coal economy.

Air Quality:

- NSW Government should not approve any additional mines in the Upper Hunter given the regular exceedances of air quality national standards already occurring. It is clear that air quality pollution from coal mining is not able to be satisfactorily mitigated.

Enough is enough. Please do not approve yet another coal mine in the Hunter Valley and worsen the prospects for the survival of life on Earth.

Yours sincerely,

Su Morley

1. <https://www.science.org.au/news-and-events/news-and-media-releases/statement-regarding-australian-bushfires>
2. <https://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/28/toughen-environmental-laws-to-stem-extinction-crisis-scientists-tell-morrison>
4. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-15/worlds-largest-fund-manager-to-cut-thermal-coal-exposure/11869300>
5. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-13/norway-sovereign-wealth-fund-to-ditch-billions-in-coal-stakes/11205134>