

Legislative Scrutiny Committee
Email: LSC@nt.gov.au.

Dear Committee members

Please accept my submission to the Legislative Scrutiny Committee inquiry into the Environment Legislation Amendment (Safe-Air) Bill 2026.

I wish to provide the following comments on the Bill.

I am pleased to see the Parliament is considering a Bill that sets up a framework in the Environment Protection Act 2019 for industry-funded environmental monitoring schemes.

I was pleased to hear the Minister's immediate plan is to develop regulations to provide for an air quality monitoring scheme, including BTEX monitoring.

I listened online to the public briefing on 31 August and was pleased to hear the following:

- Impacts on the environment OR human health may be monitored within a monitoring program.
- An air quality monitoring scheme is to provide reliable data to measure and detect levels of pollutants in the air and give the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority the information it needs to make regulatory decisions
- The data resulting from this air quality monitoring scheme is to give the public confidence that development is being conducted in a way that does not harm public health.

Please note my following concerns, some of which were raised by members at the public hearing.

- The Bill offers no guarantee that data produced through monitoring will be publicly available.
 - How may the public be reassured that the data will be made available and accessible?
I understand that current monitoring undertaken in the Darwin airshed is available on the NT EPA website.
Monitoring for new parameters, like BTEX, will increase the volume and complexity of the data. How will this be made available in an understandable way?
- Who will pay for the air quality monitoring?
 - Licence fees for Santos, INPEX and Blacktip ENI will total approximately \$257,000.
 - Licence fees are not for their air quality monitoring. But the Bill is for cost recovery?
 - ENI has never paid a licence fee despite it being legislated and has no retrospective liability. How may industry be compelled to pay its bills?
- Where will the air monitoring sites be?

- The current sites do not cover Greater Darwin adequately. Adding BTEX monitoring at existing sites only will not be sufficient.
- How will sites be decided? For example, is criteria such as the following taken into account:
 - Locations of schools, sports fields and reserves. Where people are outdoors with no protection from poor air.
 - High population densities; e.g. homes not infrastructure
 - Prevailing winds. Direction of travel of pollutants and if conditions trap pollutants in place.
 - Seasonal conditions, such as the impact of high humidity on air stagnating.

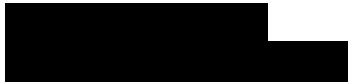
From what I heard at the public briefing, these concerns are more likely to be addressed in the Regulations that support a Safe Air Act and the ongoing work of the Department of Lands, Planning and Environment.

I heard that consultation for the Regulations will be only with industries contributing financially.

I think public consultation may be necessary to enable my concerns to be addressed.

Yours sincerely

Kathie Rea

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