

Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 Submission

From: Protect NT Inc

Email: [REDACTED]

To: Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee
EPSC@nt.gov.au

Dear Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee and Ministers,

Please accept this as Protect NT Incorporated's submission of comments on the Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 Serial No. 76.

Protect NT Inc is an independent community group that was incorporated last September by Territorians determined to protect our land, water, climate and lifestyle. We consider onshore shale oil and gas fracking to be one of the greatest risks the NT currently faces and are determined to see it permanently banned.

Therefore we, like the majority of Territorians, think that the Petroleum Act 2019 (NT) should read:

“All onshore unconventional oil and gas exploration, extraction and production, namely hydraulic fracturing and coal gasification is forbidden throughout the Northern Territory.”

Protect NT has been speaking with thousands of Territorians about hydraulic fracturing in the NT. Our petition, which is yet to be presented to Parliament, has over 2,000 signatures from people calling for fracking to be completely banned in the Northern Territory. These signatures will join the thousands of others from previous petitions from other groups and individuals calling for a total fracking ban.

We have tried to encourage our supporters to send submissions addressing this Bill but have discovered that many of our supporters have submission fatigue from the recent flurry of submissions due these past months.

We have also encountered strong distrust of the submission process, with people telling us 'it is a waste of time' and 'our Government won't listen anyway'. These sentiments are easily understood when you consider the number of Territorians who wrote to the NT Fracking Inquiry and provided feedback at the Inquiry's community meetings, briefings and hearings. People and experts provided scientific evidence of the risks of fracking and called for it to be banned as it has been elsewhere, only to be ignored by our Government who lifted the moratorium. We understand their disillusionment, and their impatience for the next NT election so they can vote in an anti-fracking government to reverse this Government's decision to allow hydraulic fracturing.

Hydraulic fracturing for onshore shale oil and gas is too risky to allow, many other countries and jurisdictions have banned it. We think the Northern Territory should too.

This Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2018 only mitigates the risks of 'fracking', the Bill does not eliminate them. We consider the risk levels after mitigation to be unacceptable, so therefore stand by our earlier comment, the Petroleum Act 2019 (NT) should read:

“All onshore unconventional oil and gas exploration, extraction and production, namely hydraulic fracturing and coal gasification is forbidden throughout the Northern Territory.”

Yours Sincerely,
Steve Vidler,
Chair of Protect NT Incorporated.