

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mrs Lambley to the Minister for Environment:

Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment

The Fracking “Pepper” Inquiry outlined that the Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment (“SREBA”) data acquisition, interpretation and reporting stages be conducted over a 3 to 5 year period. However it was recently announced the SREBA will be completed over a period of 18 months only.

1. Why has the timeframe for the SREBA process been cut from 3-5 years to 18 months?
2. What steps have been taken to ensure that the all the measures outlined in the Pepper Inquiry will being met due to this decreased timeline?

Underground Water Final Risk Assessments

The recently discovered presence of Stygofauna in several underground water systems seems to indicate a higher level of interconnectivity of underground water sources, as well as higher flow rates, than previously thought.

3. Please explain what plans are in place for undertaking final risk assessments of underground water systems subsequent to the finalisation of SREBA.

Strategic Regional Environmental Baseline Assessment Funding

Recommendation 9.4 of the Pepper Inquiry requires that the SREBA be funded by the gas Industry. However the Northern Territory Government is paying for the SREBA, on the understanding that the gas industry will “reimburse” this amount if and when the onshore gas industry ever reaches production.

4. Please clarify whether the SREBA process will be fully paid for upfront by the gas industry?
5. If not, please clarify if the NT government is planning to pay for some or all of the SREBA costs upfront and then be reimbursed by gas industry companies?

6. If the NT Government is paying for some or all of the SREBA costs, please provide the policy or contract deals for this information.
7. If the NT Government is paying for some or all of the SREBA costs, please provide details on how much has been spend on this process.

Imperial Oil and Gas Pty Ltd Environmental Management Plan

Imperial Oil and Gas Pty Ltd recently announced their intention to drill and frack up to seven new wells near Cape Crawford and Limmen Bight National Park. A project of this size would usually require a full Environmental Impact Assessment, not just an Environmental Management Plan.

8. Can you please advise if you will be requiring Imperial Oil and Gas Pty Ltd to undertake a full Environmental Impact Assessment?
9. Can you please advise the baseline in size and scope for projects which will require a full Environmental Impact Assessment?

Emissions Offsetting

Recommendation 9.8 of the Pepper Inquiry was that “That there is no net increase in the life cycle GHG (Green House Gas) emissions emitted in Australia from any onshore shale gas produced in the Northern Territory”.

10. Please explain how the Northern Territory government is planning to address recommendation 9.8 of the Pepper Inquiry.
11. Please explain the timeframes in which the Northern Territory government is planning to address recommendation 9.8 of the Pepper Inquiry.

Environmental Management Plans

Recommendation 14.15 of the Pepper Inquiry stated that prior to the grant of any further exploration approvals, all draft Environment Management Plans for hydraulic fracturing must be published in print and online and available for public comment prior to Ministerial approval. The “Have Your Say” website replaced newspaper notifications for major projects in the Northern Territory from the end of March 2021.

12. Please explain how the public can access information on planned Exploration Permits and Environmental Management Plans if the only publication of this data is on the “Have Your Say” website?
13. If people do not have reliable excess to the internet, please explain what, if any, other sources of information are available to parties interested in the Environmental Management Plans?