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19th December 2012

Mr David Mooney
Planner
The Department of Planning & Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Via email: david.mooney@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Mooney,

Anglo American Drayton South Coal Project (Drayton Mine), Application Number: 11_0062

I am writing as a concerned farmer and resident of the Hunter Valley to **object** to the Drayton South open coal mine project. My reasons for objecting to this proposal are as follows:

Socio-Economic issues

1. So much is being written on Australia's next boom industry – Agriculture. Australia has the capacity to feed half of South East Asia **if** our land and water is left intact. The Hunter Valley is well connected to shipping and airports by road and rail. A perfect location for Agriculture. Food production is sustainable, it can go on forever. In contrast mining is short term and leaves total destruction. Mining sterilises land for agricultural use.
2. This mine proposal will have an unjustified impact on neighbouring industries and the community. The thoroughbred industry is a sustainable industry that employs more permanent staff than the coal mining industry, and can continue that employment for years to come. This mine proposal threatens this industry as it is a source of dust pollution, noise pollution and water pollution. If threatened by this mine, the industry will move to an area which fits into its business plan, an area where it is not threatened by mines.
3. An **economic impact assessment** must be undertaken to assess the effect of this mine proposal on all other non-mining industries and businesses in the area. Prospective rural businesses will not locate to areas threatened by coal mine expansion.

Soil and Land

4. There is presently no certainty that mined land can be returned to viable agricultural use. The NSW Minerals Council Stakeholders workshops are only now investigating how to remedy the soil and water destruction that has occurred with open cut mining during the last thirty years.
5. Open cut mining has only been used for the last thirty years. It may take fifty to one hundred years to see the long term effects of this type of mining. Australia must not take a "chance" that "all will be well".

Water

6. Without water, in quantity and quality, there is no life. There has been no complete study of water in the entire Hunter valley, especially in relation to surface and groundwater and their connectivity. The connectivity between groundwater and surface water must be assessed before this project goes ahead.
7. The water sharing plan is being breached constantly.

Social and Economic

8. Further mine development will place the Golden Highway under immense traffic pressure. At present the Golden Highway is only just capable of handling the existing traffic flow. Increased mine traffic will impact on emergency services, local schools and the community.

Air Quality, Dust and Pollutants

9. Fourteen air monitors in the Upper Hunter air quality monitoring network are collecting data on dust particles in the atmosphere. Recently air quality alerts, when levels of dust become hazardous, have become frequent. Levels of dust are too high now; additional mines will contribute to higher levels of dust. The mitigation measures that the mines take to reduce dust are not effective, or we would not have such a high frequency of air quality alerts.
10. The cumulative effect of many mines producing dust needs to be taken into consideration when considering this application. Further study is needed in this area before new mines are approved.
11. CSIRO and ANSTO are currently testing the chemical composition of dust collected. The research on ultrafine particles and their composition has not been completed.
12. The quantity of mine dust that falls out of the atmosphere is increasing. Rural communities that rely on rain water for drinking are being exposed to this fallout that collects on their roofs and ends up in their rain water tanks.

Health

13. A health assessment study on the effect of coal mining pollution on human and animal health has never been part of the mine application process. This must now be part of the application process prior to any consideration of a mine extension or new mine.
14. Thoroughbred race horses must be "dust free". Lungs filters dust out of the atmosphere and this dust accumulate in the horses' lungs as it does in humans lungs.
15. Muswellbrook and Singleton Local government areas are over represented in emergency department presentations for asthma and respiratory ailments. "Singleton and Muswellbrook local government areas have higher rates of cardiovascular disease hospital separations than all of Hunter New England Area Health Service (HNEAHS) or NSW." (p.19 NSW Department of Health (2010) Respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and cancer among residents in the Hunter New England Area Health Service report).
16. Best practice dust minimisation in the mining industry has no meaning. There are no set criteria and weather conditions alter practices within seconds. Coal mines do not adjust their operations when conditions are not favourable for dust production.

Cumulative Studies on the impact of mining on health, dust pollution, noise, traffic congestion, water and economic impacts need to be conducted before new mines or mine extensions are approved.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Bowman