

Objection To Tahmoor Expansion

To Whom It May Concern,

I am submitting this letter of objection to the expansion of the Tahmoor mine on the grounds of water security, biodiversity, bushfire risk, climate change, housing subsidence, diminishing economic benefits, and the incredibly poor track record of mine rehabilitation in Australia.

In the most populous city on the driest inhabited continent on the planet it is unacceptable to continue longwall mining beneath the water catchment and further jeopardise our water security. Living near Thirlmere Lakes and Redbank Creek for most of my life, I have seen firsthand the impact that mining has had on these valuable parts of the ecosystem and water catchment.

With a loss of water from these areas as a result of mining subsidence it can be reasonably expected that there will be a subsequent impact on biodiversity and bushfire risk as these areas continue to dry up. We have seen from the 2019/20 bushfire season that areas that were previously too damp to burn have dried enough to be burned beyond repair. During this fire season there was a loss of billions of animals as well as vitally important flora.

As we progress towards further expanding our climate change mitigation commitments, we must include the gradual phasing out of mining that contributes significantly to humanity's greenhouse gas emissions. The mining, transport and burning of coal is one of the most significant contributors to climate change. Knowing that emissions must be cut significantly by 2030 and even more drastically by 2050 to limit global temperature rise, it makes no sense to push ahead with the expansion of a coal mine that will run until 2032, when the risk of its continued operation will be especially heightened and the economic benefit will be significantly diminished.

The rapid push towards greater use of renewable energy has shown not only great economic benefit in terms of job creation and the building of infrastructure, but it has also made the economic argument for the continued mining and burning of coal become a harder and harder position to take. Coal mining has increasingly moved towards automation and it is no longer the great employer it once was. Instead we see much of the profits from the extraction of Australian coal go to multinational companies and their overseas shareholders. We are also seeing low prices for coal while China has banned Australian coal imports, further devaluing this resource. We must look ahead to technologies that will have a minimal impact on the environment for our energy generation and steel production, not those that wreak so much damage for an increasingly reduced benefit.

Australia is home to tens of thousands of abandoned mines, the vast majority of which have not been rehabilitated. Just in the local Wollondilly and Illawarra areas there are dozens of abandoned mines that have not been rehabilitated. With this long history of mining companies shirking their environmental responsibilities I find it incredibly difficult to believe that Tahmoor Coal would be capable of adequately rehabilitating the vast area of damage its operations will cause.

Tahmoor Coal's expansion will not provide anywhere near the economic benefit needed to offset the decades, if not centuries, of environmental damage it will cause both locally and globally, it will not provide compensation for the inevitable loss of flora and fauna to bushfire and water loss in the area, it will significantly threaten the water security of Australia's most populous city, and Tahmoor Coal cannot be trusted to conduct adequate rehabilitation works to offset the damage they will cause. For these reasons this expansion must be rejected.