

Olivia Newton-John

July 31, 2011

Open Letter to My Fellow Australians:

I love this country, its people, its rugged beauty, its rainforests, its vastness and unique wildlife. And, as a longtime advocate of the environment, I am greatly concerned for the continued health and wellness of Australia. My dream is that our children and grandchildren can enjoy the Australia that we all know and love.

That is why I am horrified to learn of the extensive plans for coal seam gas and shale gas exploration in Australia. Until recently, I was totally unaware of the hidden dangers lurking in this so-called clean natural gas exploration.

I have learned there are serious risks to human health and the environment associated with coal seam gas mining (CSG) and hydraulic fracturing. "Fracking" is the practice of using high-pressure pumps to inject a mixture of sand, water and, a mystery cocktail of toxic chemicals into gas wells to release unconventional gas.

In fact, according to the National Toxics Network, only two of the 23 most commonly used chemicals used in this fracking process have even been assessed by the National Regulator.

In America, some of the chemicals used in these operations are suspected to be cancer-causing agents. There have been reports of serious health and environmental damage from these mining practices. In Demick, Pennsylvania, some people living next to these drilling operations have so much gas and chemical pollutants in their tap water they can literally light it on fire!

Because of these kinds of problems, England, France and South Africa have already banned this type of exploration. Right now we still have the opportunity to avoid the disastrous environmental mistakes made by other countries.

Here is a frightening fact. Did you know that if a gas company thinks there is gas under your land, you don't have any legal right to stop them entering your land to explore it and, if you try to stop them, they can take you to land court? And, when they finally leave your land, which could be twenty years from now, your property may be a toxic wasteland?

Are you aware that gas leases in Queensland and New South Wales already cover an area ten times the size of Tasmania?

We have the largest pure water source in the world. In fact, the Great Artesian Basin covers a vast area of our country's land mass (about one quarter in total!), and Australia is one of the few countries where it is safe to drink from your tap at home. How can we even consider putting one of our countries greatest natural resources, our fresh water supply, at risk?

After talking with my friends and family, I realize there is lack of information and very few answers to many important questions. The gas companies' plans for exploration on private property throughout Australia is virtually unknown by private property owners. It was a surprise to me. The public's awareness as to what is happening, and the potential consequences to our health and our land shows that it's time for some serious inquiries.

On behalf of my family and friends and my fellow Australians, I would like answers to the

following questions:

- -What studies have been done to prove beyond any shadow of doubt that coal seam gas mining does not damage and pollute the water table?
- What chemicals are being used in CSG exploration and mining?
- -Why are mining companies exempt from revealing the chemicals used in fracking?
- If no extensive studies on the effects of these chemicals have been conducted, then why are they already in use?
- Has the government considered that we may be sacrificing a sustainable source of food and water for a short term financial gain?
- In our land of abundant sunshine surrounded by ocean, have we thoroughly explored alternative non-toxic energy sources?

In addition, I am so alarmed to hear that dredging is taking place in our precious Great Barrier Reef at Curtis Island and around the Queensland port of Gladstone, which could have a direct negative impact on the marine ecology of the Reef. In fact, several dugongs have already been washed up on the beaches in the area. (For more information please visit www.LockTheGate.org.au.)

Until these questions are answered, I respectfully request a moratorium on the coal seam gas exploration and mining in Australia until all health, social and environmental risks have been fully explored. We must have answers and regulations for what could be a very serious issue to the health and wellbeing of ALL Australians.

Write to or phone your local member and ask for coal seam mining and fracking to be stopped until we know what harm these chemicals will do to our water, our soil, the air we breathe, our animals, our trees, our rivers, and our food chain for generations to come.

With Deep Concern,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Olivia Newton-John', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Olivia Newton-John