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PULP MILL HAZE: AIR POLLUTION CONCERNS GROW...

Welcome to the second edition of the Tasmanian Greens pulp mill newsletter.

Just a fortnight to go before the deadline closes for submissions to the RPDC. I hope you are working on a personal contribution now ... This week, the Greens will be distributing a Submission Writing Guide to help concerned Tasmanians make a considered response to the Gunns' IIS. Remember, it doesn't have to be a weighty tome. It can be short, sharp and covering the key points of concern.

There are so many to choose from! As this edition of our newsletter reveals, air quality in the Tamar Valley and Launceston is shaping up to be a primary cause of alarm among residents.

Clean Air is a Fundamental Right

In the past fortnight, the National Toxics Network and Victorian environmental consultant, Aron Gingis, have both highlighted serious air pollution issues associated with the proposed Long Reach mill.

Mr Gingis contends that emissions from the mill and its wood-fired power plant would become trapped in the Tamar Valley. He told ABC radio that during wet and cold days, the pollution would drift towards Launceston, making the city almost uninhabitable.⁸

No matter how tall Gunns' mill stack is, there's no getting around the fact the mill would pollute the air we breathe with chemical compounds that enter our blood stream through our lungs.

It's the young, the sick, frail and elderly we should be most worried about. As you will read on page two, the Lennon Government is well aware of the serious health impacts caused by fine particle pollution.

We already know Georgetown suffers from ongoing air pollution problems, and on a number of days each year airborne particulates exceed the national standard.

It beggars belief that a Tasmanian Government would be so blindly supportive of a mill proposal which looks set to harm the health of its own citizens. Are we living in 2006, or 1906?

As Senator Milne pointed out, in 1989, a pulp mill was rejected for the area around Long Reach because of the atmospheric inversion in the Tamar Valley, and because the waters of Bass Strait near the Tamar outfall are too shallow to deal the pollution load. What has changed in the past 17 years?

We have a moral duty to protect Tasmania from reckless exploitation. Let's keep the pressure on the RPDC and the Lennon Government to abandon this toxic mill.

Making a submission to the RPDC will help expose the Gunns' IIS for the pseudo-scientific sham it is!



Kim Booth MHA

GREENS PULP MILL CONTACT



Kim Booth MHA

Member for Bass and the
Tasmanian Greens Pulp Mill
spokesperson

(03) 6336 2294

greensnorth@parliament.tas.gov.au

www.tas.greens.org.au

DON'T PULP OUR FUTURE!



Worried about possible impacts the proposed pulp mill will have on your air and water quality, farms, forests, roads and your hip pocket?

If so, come to a free lunchtime presentation by Kim Booth MHA on the proposed Long Reach pulp mill

Thursday, 14th September
12:30 - 1:15pm
Pilgrim Uniting Hall, Paterson St.,
Launceston

For more information phone: (03) 6336 2294

COUNTDOWN: YOUR PULP MILL SUBMISSION... 2 weeks to go...

Making a submission to the RPDC on Gunns' proposed pulp mill Integrated Impact Assessment (IIS) is your opportunity to have a say.

- Every submission is important.
- Submissions can be a page or two long and still make the necessary salient points.
- Contact us to obtain a set of submission guidelines which may assist in preparing effective submissions.
- Your submission should address any potential environmental, social, and economic impacts of the construction and operation of the proposed mill.

Submissions must be received by the RPDC by 4.30 pm on 25 September 2006.

(RPDC contact details are on pg. 4)

POTENTIAL IMPACTS IN BRIEF

Pollution

- An estimated 100,000 kg of particulate pollution emitted from the stack into the Tamar airshed, including Launceston, each year ^{1,8}
- Persistent odour problems in population centres around the mill ⁵
- 69,800,000 litres equalling 70,000 tonnes of effluent containing toxic compounds (including dioxins and furans) pumped into slow flushing Bass Strait each day ¹
- 48,000 tonnes per year of 'controlled waste' dumped near the mill, potentially leaking and contaminating groundwater around the mill and the Tamar River ⁵

Harm To Health

- **Eight premature deaths each year** are caused by the current fine particle pollution load in the city of Launceston, as estimated by the Tasmanian Government's own *Air Quality Strategy* ⁴
- George Town is already 15% over the National Air Pollution limits on occasion ⁵
- Tamar valley topography will trap fine particulate matter in air around population centres ⁸

Public Asset Giveaway

- 26,000,000,000 (billion) litres of water drawn from South Esk catchment annually, and none recycled ¹
- Accelerated clearfelling of high conservation value forests, to supply 80% of feedstock to mill initially ¹
- 20 year secret wood supply deal between Gunns Ltd and Government Business Enterprise, Forestry Tasmania
- Increase in woodchip exports reportedly from 3.8 million to 7 million tonnes by 2018

Farmland Lost to Plantations

- Gunns have stated they want at least another 150,000 hectares of plantation for this mill; how much of this will be on precious farmland? ¹

Dangerous Roads

- 640 extra truck movement a day at peak construction ¹ and every day during operation, a dozen trucks carrying chemicals such as caustic soda, sulphuric acid and hydrogen peroxide would arrive at the mill ¹
- Predicted increase in road fatalities due to increased log truck and heavy machinery traffic ¹

Short-Sighted Economics

- Only 233 jobs for Tasmanians once mill is operational (Source: Pulp Mill Taskforce)
- \$11.5 million State and Commonwealth taxpayer subsidy

Note: numerals (i.e. ¹) refer to source material listed on pg. 3.

BASS GREENS SUBMISSION WRITING WORKSHOP

with Dr. Elizabeth Templeton on **Monday 18 September at 5.30pm** at the **Green Room 174 Charles St., Launceston**

Contact **6336 2294** for more details

POLLUTING LAND, SEA AND AIR

In its submission, *Gunning Down the Spin: The Dirty Reality of Pulp Mill Pollution*, August 2006, the National Toxics Network (NTN) said,

"There are many potential pollution sources at the pulp mill including boilers, incinerators, effluent treatment processes, chemical manufacturing operations, waste dumps and an ocean outfall for waste liquids."

"The process is complex and uses a range of hazardous chemicals ... which generate a myriad of chemical pollutants to air, land and sea. Many of the compounds present in the effluent have not been able to be identified in laboratories."

The National Toxics Network Says:

- Air quality in population centres near the mill will be compromised by mill stack emissions. Odour problems will not be resolvable.
- The proposed limit for emissions of particulates into the atmosphere by the pulp mill is inadequate and fails to meet national environment protection standards.
- Groundwater will eventually be contaminated at the waste dump site, and under the mill itself.
- The marine dumping of effluent is likely to have a deleterious effect upon marine life and ecosystems.
- The Gunns' IIS reveals a failure to carry out appropriate baseline studies and modelling.
- The proposed mill fails the 'precautionary principle' and 'intergenerational equity' tests.⁵

GOVERNMENT IGNORES OWN AIR QUALITY GUIDE

Gunns' IIS reveals the mill is expected to produce 100,000 kg of particulate pollution into the Tamar airshed each year. These extracts from the *Tasmanian Air Quality Strategy 2006* make for interesting reading in the context of the mill proposal:

"Over the last decade or so, considerable data has been gathered by researchers implicating tiny airborne particles in human mortality and morbidity..."

"Collectively, airborne particles are known as particulate material (PM). The two main fractions of airborne particles of concern are PM 10 and PM 2.5."

"Specifically, elevated particulate concentrations have been associated with increased:

- Total mortality
- Respiratory deaths
- Cardiovascular deaths
- Cancer deaths
- Risk of premature births and infant mortality
- Risk of pneumonia
- Risk of postneonatal mortality for respiratory disease and SIDS
- Exacerbation of asthma attacks"⁴

BASS STRAIT SCIENCE

Flinders University PhD student and oceanographer, Paul Sandery, is a published expert in large scale water movements in Bass Strait.

In his submission to the RPDC, Mr Sandery questions the science behind the Gunns' IIS.

He says studies carried out for Gunns are not entirely adequate to predict the potential long-term impacts on the Tamar Estuary and Bass Strait.

Mr Sandery says, " ... Gunns' Integrated Impact Statement (IIS) does not resolve uncertainty about the pulp mill's long-term impacts on the marine environment with respect to:

- Accumulation of pollutants, particularly dioxins and furans, in sediments and the food chain in the Tamar Estuary and Bass Strait;
- Potential long-term impacts on fisheries and marine ecosystems in Bass Strait, and estuarine nurseries in the Tamar estuary."

Mr Sandery's studies have shown the effluent outfall area is relatively stagnant, and subject to seasonal variation.

"A serious concern is not really knowing what the levels of pollutants and contaminants will be in Bass Strait over the lifetime of the pulp mill" Mr Sandery said.⁷

REFERENCES and LINKS - Sources referred to in this publication include:

1. Gunns' Draft Integrated Impact Statement - <<http://www.gunnspulpmill.com.au/iis>>.
2. For information about lodging your submission, visit the Resource Planning and Development Commission (RPDC) website - <http://www.rpdc.tas.gov.au/projects_state_signif/pulp_mill/pm_docs/pm_index.htm>
3. For information about the RPDC Integrated Assessment Process for Gunns' pulp mill proposal - <http://www.rpdc.tas.gov.au/projects_state_signif/pulp_mill/pm_dwnl/Integrated_Assessment_Information_Brochure_130706.pdf>
4. *Tasmanian Air Quality Strategy 2006*, Tasmanian Government <<http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au/inter.nsf/WebPages/CDAT-6FA6QD?open#draft>>
5. 'Gunning Down the Spin: The Dirty Reality of Pulp Mill Pollution', August 2006. National Toxics Network. <<http://www.oztoxics.org>>
6. 'Winter Spring Flushing of Bass Strait, SE Australia: A numerical modelling study. Paul A. Sandery, Jochen Kampf
7. Paul Sandery, Department of Chemistry, Physics and Earth Sciences at Flinders University. Media Release, 3 September 2006
8. ABC Radio News, 6 September 2006 <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200609/s1733897.htm>>
9. Stateline Tasmanian, ABC TV, 4 March 2005 - <<http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/tas/content/2005/s1316319.htm>>

WHAT YOU CAN DO

A united, informed community *can* defeat this mill.

Make a submission on the IIS...

... to the Resource Planning and Development Commission. The RPDC's postal address is:

GPO Box 1691, HOBART 7000

The closing date for submissions is
25 September 2006, 4:30pm.

Contact the media

Letters to the editors and calls or e-mails to talk-back radio make a big difference. This helps decision-makers gauge public opinion PLUS maintains community debate.

Letters to the Editor

The Mercury

Macquarie St, Hobart 7000

Fax: (03) 6230 0711

E-mail: <mercuryledletter@dbl.newsltd.com.au>

The Examiner

PO Box 99A, Launceston 7250

Fax: (03) 6334 7328

E-mail: <editor@examiner.com.au>

The Advocate

56 Mount St, Burnie 7320

Fax: (03) 6498 7852

E-mail: <letters@theadvocate.com.au>

Talk-Back Radio

ABC Mornings is a local Tasmanian daily talk-back radio program.

ABC Tasmania

Local Talkback - (9am - 12noon)

Ph: 1300 222 936

E-mail: <tasmornings@your.abc.net.au>

Also keep an eye on

<www.tas.greens.org.au> for updated information.

SUBSCRIBE! You can receive this newsletter via e-mail or post; just ring or e-mail us.

MORE INFORMATION

Phone: (03) 6233 8300

E-mail: greens@parliament.tas.gov.au

Contact your elected representatives

The Lennon Labor Government, the Tasmanian Liberal Party, Federal ALP leadership and the Howard Government back the proposed Gunns mill. Contact them to say the only mill we should consider for Tasmania is a Totally Chlorine Free (TCF), closed loop, plantation-fed mill which has community support. Below is a list of both federal and state parliamentarians to contact. [Please send a copy of your concerns to the Greens' pulp mill contacts listed below.]

STATE PARLIAMENT

For each below post to:

c/o Parliament House, HOBART 7000

Labor

- Premier Paul Lennon (Franklin)
- Michelle O'Byrne MHA (Bass)
- Jim Cox MHA (Bass)
- David Llewellyn MHA (Lyons)
- Michael Polley MHA (Lyons)
- Heather Butler MHA (Lyons)

Liberal

- Peter Gutwein MHA (Bass)
- Sue Napier MHA (Bass)
- Rene Hidding MHA (Lyons)

Greens

- Kim Booth MHA (Bass)
- Tim Morris MHA (Lyons)

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

For each below post to:

c/o Parliament House, CANBERRA 2600

Liberal

- Michael Ferguson MHR
- Senator Ian Campbell - Federal Minister for the Environment

Greens

- Senator Christine Milne



Tasmanian Greens State Parliamentarians, from left. Tim Morris MHA (Lyons), Peg Putt MHA (Denison), Nick McKim MHA (Franklin), Kim Booth MHA (Bass)