



MEDIA RELEASE

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Banned in Queensland, but OK for SA?!

A highly controversial gas technology — banned in Queensland last year for causing 'the biggest pollution event' in that state's history — has been backed by the Weatherill Government to come to South Australia.

Two of the state's leading environment bodies are calling for an immediate ban on a trial proposed for Leigh Creek using the dirty Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) process.

"It's hard to imagine a more irresponsible plan," said Craig Wilkins, Chief Executive of Conservation SA.

"Last year, Queensland made Underground Coal Gasification illegal after it contaminated hundreds of square kilometres of the Darling Downs with harmful gases.

"Yet on Friday, despite the objections of energy experts, environmental groups, nearby residents and Traditional Owners, the Weatherill Government accepted for public consultation a potential trial at the old Leigh Creek mine site," he said.

UCG (or *in situ* gasification) involves setting fire to underground coal to extract gas. In April 2016, the Queensland Government banned UCG after the worst contamination event in the state's history at the Linc Energy UCG plant at Hopeland.

The Queensland ban follows similar experiences overseas, where UCG was found to have caused groundwater contamination in Wyoming and Colorado, and a methane explosion at a plant in Spain. The only remaining commercial UCG site in the world is in Uzbekistan.

"Allowing this dirty technology in our state is completely at odds with a Government that regularly flies to Paris and New York to trumpet their climate change credentials," said Wilderness Society South Australian Director Peter Owen.

"With our state's exciting and extensive opportunities in renewable energy we simply don't need this here.

"After Queensland has made it illegal in that state, how can Minister Koutsantonis think that it is appropriate in South Australia?" he asked.

The Leigh Creek Energy proposal is open for a statutory 30-day public consultation period that ends on 28 February 2018:

http://petroleum.statedevelopment.sa.gov.au/latest_updates/invitation_for_public_comment_-_seoeir

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