

ENERGY ROAD MAP & GREENHOUSE GAS STORAGE

AMENDMENT BILLS 2025 COGNATE

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Mr Speaker,

First the Energy Road Map Amendment Bill and the government's 5-year energy plan, which through these amendments' sees considerable changes to the *Energy (Renewable Transformation and Jobs) Act 2024* (Energy Act).

It provides for repealing renewable energy targets, ensuring all existing energy assets are 100% state-owned, extends the operational lifetime for coal-fired power stations including beyond 2042, and opens a private investment gateway for future renewable, gas and storage projects.

The objectives stated are to provide energy, which is affordable, reliable and sustainable. This is what every single one of us seek on behalf of our communities, as always, the devil is in the detail. Let's look at this.

1.) Affordability: power bills contribute to financial hardship, with rebates not targeted to those who need it most. Can we please have a definition of what is affordable, including a comparative to

what is being paid per kw right now, 33.7 cents per kWh (kilowatt-hour retail) and what this will go down to?

2.) Reliability: is vital for our industries and essential services, especially those without generators. Battery backups may not extend for the duration of power outages, as was experienced with our telecommunications during the November storms. For vulnerable households in heat waves reliant on kidney dialysis machines or home-based oxygen concentrators, an ageing network of coal-powered stations due for decommissioning by 2035 may become unable to deliver, leading to blow outs in maintenance and our power bills.

3. Sustainability. This is the big one, argued between political parties, online and over our coffees!

The decision for us in the Chamber as representatives of our communities, and as mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, is how to address our needs now, without impacting our future. Coal versus renewables.

Our coal fired power stations are old, and extending beyond the decommissioning date will increase maintenance costs.

In addition, renewables take extensive processes costing tens of millions of dollars and a decade to go through, as with the Forest

Wind project, which will be axed in last minute amendments to repeal the Act that was specific to that project, on that state site.

Why? If the project doesn't meet requirements, it will be refused.

This really made me wonder.

The irony is that this bill, and in speeches, is the touting of private investment for renewables on one hand, and without any community consultation, is repealing in a last minute amendment, a private, QLD family project. This after they have spent \$25m in a decade of planning, processes and consultation. Just like that. Justifiably communities and businesses lose faith in governments, its processes and politicians when they see this. And when we kick the can down the road for others to deal with.

The repealing or abandoning of former renewable targets may pass the 'pub test' with a promise of affordable (definition?) electricity to our homes. However, as we have seen, promises by governments mean nothing, without a guarantee of what a strategy means now, and in 5 or 10 years' time to actual prices.

That said, a target for target's sake without a realistic, implementable plan also does NOT pass the pub test.

There were 41 submissions to the inquiry, some in support of the removal of renewable targets, others not, such as the Queensland Renewable Energy Council who said targets were

instrumental in driving private investment and Smart Energy Council for increasing certainty for investors.

A Dissenting Report highlighted privatisation concerns that with state required to retain assets it already owns, there is nothing to mandate them investing in new ones. With Queenslanders believing essentials such as power should be owned by the people or at least controlled through a public-private partnership, the lack of specificity in this bill about the ownership and control for new generation projects, and what they are, is concerning.

Moving on, amendments will see the Energy Industry Council, QLD Energy System Advisory Board and QLD Renewable Energy Jobs Advocate abolished, citing reasons of administrative complexity, cost reduction and duplication with existing government functions. There is a commitment that government will continue to seek expert advice in energy policy decisions, however we need independent bodies to analyse what is occurring, not advice kept out of public domain as we have seen in other realms.

The delivery of the Copper String project which connects North and North West QLD to the national electricity market via a 1050km high-voltage overhead electricity transmission line between Mt Isa and Townsville is welcomed and long fought for by KAP. To the Greenhouse Gas Storage component of the cognate. These amendments provide for the option of decommissioned

greenhouse gas wells rather than being 'plugged and abandoned' be converted to bores, providing a valuable water resource and a positive legacy for these otherwise abandoned wells, and was supported by all submitters.

In conclusion, our climate is changing with increased challenges now and into the future. The political divide between and within the major parties on energy at all levels of government is well known, and extremely confusing for Queenslanders, as who to believe?

The question we all need to ask ourselves. Do we 'kick the can down the road' on this, as that is what this bill does. Or do we push on and support those in hardship as we transition, because any transition will cost, whether it is while we are still alive, or not.

We all want to get to that 'affordable' power, whatever that definition is. And from modelling, renewables with storage has a better chance to get there than other options.