

Hon Colin de Grussa MLC

Member for the Agricultural Region

Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
C/- council@parliament.wa.gov.au

7 July 2017

Dear Mr Swinbourn

PETITION NO. 014 – PROPOSED LANDFILL IN ESPERANCE

I write in response to your letter of 15 June 2017. Please consider this my submission regarding the issues raised in this petition.

The current waste facility site in Esperance is approaching the end of its operational lifespan, and has a licence expiration date of 2019. A new landfill site needs to be secured and constructed prior to the closure of the current site. After exploring several sites, the Shire of Esperance have purchased land at Lot 12 Kirwan Road, Merivale .

A concerned group of residents have rallied, believing that the Kirwan Road site is not an appropriate location for this type of facility, and requested that I submit a petition to the Legislative Council on their behalf. These residents have a number of concerns, around environmental and other issues, however, my concerns regarding the proposed site centre mainly on environmental issues.

This site is located immediately north of, and in the catchment of a series of wetlands which are Ramsar listed – being of international significance. The eastern end of these wetlands are not currently included under the Ramsar treaty, however the Department of Parks and Wildlife have recently proposed that this part of the wetlands also be Ramsar listed. The water source for these eastern wetlands arises from the catchment area which includes the Kirwan Road site and adjoining properties. I am concerned that any potential contamination from the waste facility could result in permanent damage to the Ramsar wetlands.

The proposed facility will be located on sandplain, soils consisting of sand layered over spongelite or Pallinup Siltstone. This substance is porous to water, where the calcium carbonate in the spongelite dissolves to form channels which allows water to flow easily though the subterranean landscape. This may result in contamination from the waste facility to surrounding properties.

The site is also close to land used for agricultural and aquacultural purposes. If the new waste facility contaminates groundwater now or in the future, this will have a severe impact on these properties.

The Shire of Esperance engaged the services of a consultant to undertake a Due Diligence and Landfill Capability Assessment and a Hydrogeological Investigation . These reports

1. http://www.esperance.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication/files/tw17001-due_diligence_site_19.1b-combined.pdf
2. http://www.esperance.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication/files/tw17001-due_diligence_site_19.1b-combined.pdf
3. http://www.esperance.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/publication/files/te16039-esperance_phase_1_site_investigation_site_19.1c_-_resized.pdf



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considered the site suitable for a modern waste management facility, and that there was 'low risk' of any contamination to the surrounding areas. However, it has been brought to my attention that the water quality guidelines referred to by the consultants in their site reports are not the guidelines utilised in Western Australia.

There have been conflicting reports as to whether the Shire of Esperance will submit their proposal to the Environmental Protection Authority for consideration. While I have been assured by Shire representatives that they will complete this process, there is serious concern within the community that this will not actually happen. This lack of trust in the Shire is an important reason the petition was presented.

With my concerns regarding the risk of contamination from the waste facility site in mind, I hope to see the Shire complete not only a review with the EPA, but also seek comment from the Department of Environment Regulation on the proposal, and refer the proposal to the Department of Environment and Energy for review under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colin de Grussa', written in a cursive style.

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