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Quarantine & Biosecurity Review Panel
GPO Box 858
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Dear Panel Members

Re: Quarantine and Biosecurity Review

The success of the fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries depends on a guarantee of clear, pure water. It is equally critical to the success of these industries that Australia remain relatively free of many of the serious animal and plant pests and diseases. They are heavily export orientated and the current 'disease free' status provides them with an advantage in global markets and at that same time allows us to expect similar compliance from trading partners.

I believe that the proposed massive expansion of the commercial industrial development and large reverse osmosis desalination plant at Port Bonython on Point Lowly, particularly when combined with the expansion of the Whyalla Port which is in close proximity, will have an extremely adverse environmental effect on the waters of Spencer Gulf. The possible change in temperatures caused by global warming and salinity levels caused by increased evaporation and 100 gigalitres of hyper saline water from the desalination plant will be detrimental to the survival of indigenous species and may favour other imported ones.

The expansion at Port Bonython includes the establishment of a rail corridor, a storage site for 80 million litres of diesel and, in Stage Two, a new distribution terminal and oil refinery. The tank farm, oil refinery, iron ore port and associated shipping, and the large scale desalination plant planned for the mouth of the enclosed waters at the top of Spencer Gulf are in my view incompatible with the environmental survival of Spencer Gulf as a fish nursery and pristine marine environment.

Santos currently mixes liquid hydrocarbons- oil condensate and LPG at Moomba which are then pumped through a 659km underground pipeline to Port Bonython where the liquids are split into their various components by a distillation process. Crude oil, naphtha, propane and butane are produced and held in storage tanks with the capacity of 250,000 barrels before being pumped along a 2.4km jetty to waiting cape size tankers of up to 110,000 tonnes deadweight capacity. This is enough of a risk without the proposed major expansions.

OneSteel at Whyalla is increasing its iron ore exports from 1 million tonnes to 4 million tonnes. (The iron ore is ferried by barges to large cape-size ships anchored offshore in the Gulf.) The resulting 300% increase in shipping at Whyalla, combined with the new oil refinery and increased shipping from Point Bonython, will result in a huge increase in shipping to the top of the gulf. Increasing shipping combined with the proposed reverse osmosis desalination plant will create a much greater environmental risk to the successful fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries that are reliant on this clean natural environment.

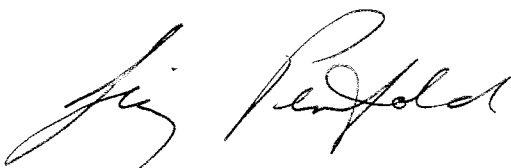
The top end of the Spencer Gulf is convenient for BHP Billiton, Santos and Port Bonython Fuels, and the State Government. However it is not the best location for activities that should be located in more open waters, well away from cuttlefish, prawn breeding grounds and the kingfish farms in nearby Fitzgerald Bay that could be wiped out with one accident or any of the marine pests and plants that will be brought in. These industrial activities should be located far from the head of the upper Spencer Gulf bounded by Point Lowly and Ward Spit. Although the water moves swiftly in a narrow, very small location with the tides around Point Lowly, it only moves backward and forward. A complete flushing of the upper Gulf rarely happens and the water does not move at all with dodge tides which occur regularly.

Global warming is enough of a challenge for the survival of the marine habitat in the top of the gulf without the dumping of thousands of tonnes of highly saline water into the gulf along with the inevitable escape of some of the chemicals used in the cleaning of filters in a reverse osmosis desalination plant, combined with a huge new commercial industrial development at Port Bonython and associated additional shipping.

It has been a source of concern to me for a number of years that ballast water and hull fouling from overseas ships introduces dangerous marine pests and unwanted and toxic micro organisms into our local marine environment. We are all well aware of the devastation caused from imported *Caulerpa taxifolia* in the Port Adelaide River, the havoc of the fan worm in Port Phillip Bay in Victoria and other similar issues in Darwin Harbour with imported species.

I am extremely concerned about potential adverse environmental and market impacts, particularly on the Eyre Peninsula region which is heavily reliant on its fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries, particularly with the current drought impacting heavily on the agriculture industry. The risks of an environmental disaster in this region must be properly assessed. In my view other options to the Point Bonython expansion should be considered in order to prevent a long term environmental disaster that has the potential to devastate Eyre Peninsula's very successful fishing, aquaculture and tourism industries.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs. Liz Penfold MP
Member for Flinders