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Liberal's inquiry risks future investment in SA's natural gas industry

A motion to be moved in the South Australian Parliament next week by the Liberal member for Mt Gambier puts at risk future investment in one of the state's most important industries.

The motion called for a Parliamentary inquiry into the natural gas industry in the South East of SA, but ignores the industry's track record of decades of safe, sustainable operations.

Santos' Vice President Eastern Australia, James Baulderstone, said that while the company had no direct operations in the South East, the company was concerned at the wider implications of the proposed inquiry.

"Santos has operated safely and sustainably in South Australia for many decades, providing employment for thousands of South Australians and hundreds of millions in taxes and royalties," Mr Baulderstone said.

"Wherever the gas industry operates it can and must do so in partnership with landholders to their mutual benefit and under strict environmental principles and practices. That has been the case in Santos' activities around Australia since our foundation 60 years ago."

Mr Baulderstone said there have been many inquiries conducted into hydraulic fracturing in Australia and around the world, with no finding of damage to water tables as being asserted by activist groups opposed on ideological grounds to ongoing investment in the natural gas industry.

Two recent comprehensive independent scientific studies in the USA and the UK again found this technique when conducted properly did not risk underground water resources.

"South Australia has a world class regulatory framework to oversee the natural gas industry's activities. This framework has stood the test of time and is a genuine competitive advantage to attracting billions of dollars of future investment in this state." he said.

"The South Australian gas industry has been built on strong bipartisan political support, which in turn has given investors' confidence to invest in this state.

"But if this inquiry is captured by political opportunists it could seriously erode that confidence, and in turn, impact the job security and future opportunities for many South Australians."

Media enquiries

Matthew Doman
+61 8 8116 5260 / +61 (0) 421 888 858
matthew.doman@santos.com

Santos Limited ABN 80 007 550 923
GPO Box 2455, Adelaide SA 5001
T: +61 8 8116 5000 / F: +61 8 8116 5131
www.santos.com