

John Robertson MP

NSW Opposition Leader



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NSW OPPOSITION WELCOMES PRIME MINISTER'S NEW APPROACH TO COAL SEAM GAS

PREMIER BARRY O'FARRELL MUST ACT TO PROTECT THE STATE'S WATER

NSW Opposition Leader John Robertson has welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement today that a new Independent Expert Scientific Committee will be established to undertake research into the impacts of Coal Seam Gas mining on water resources.

Mr Robertson said the onus is now on the O'Farrell Government to suspend all Coal Seam Gas exploration licenses and cease issuing extraction licenses until robust peer-reviewed scientific evidence is conducted into the impacts of Coal Seam Gas on ground water and aquifers.

"The Prime Minister has taken a significant step in the right direction today – but more needs to be done at a state level to protect NSW water supplies," said Mr Robertson.

"Coal Seam Gas has the potential to cause irreparable damage to age old aquifers and ground water systems.

"That's why the NSW Opposition is calling for the industry to be put on hold until the science is in on Coal Seam Gas.

"Barry O'Farrell needs to act now to protect the state's precious water resources.

"The Premier's failure to act has forced the Prime Minister to step in and establish an Independent Expert Scientific Committee to assess the impacts of Coal Seam Gas mining on water.

"The rapid expansion of the Coal Seam Gas industry has the potential to compromise water supplies and food security for NSW families.

"Barry O'Farrell needs to step up and take action now to protect NSW."

Mr Robertson said the emerging Coal Seam Gas industry could, in future, help grow the NSW economy – but that can't be allowed to occur at the expense of NSW's precious water resources.

"Over the weekend we saw the Clarence electorate on the NSW north coast vote against the unchecked expansion of the Coal Seam Gas industry," said Mr Robertson.

"The Premier needs to listen to the concerns being raised by scientists, farmers and local communities on this issue.

"Labor will continue to put pressure on the O'Farrell Government to put NSW water resources first and Coal Seam Gas second."

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