



Caroona Coal Action Group Inc.

www.ccag.org.au PO Box 119 Caroona NSW 2343

All correspondence to: Secretary, Mrs Fiona Simson "Plain Station", Bundella 2343
Ph: 02 6747 6251 Fax: 02 6747 6204 E-Mail: plainstation@bigpond.com

RENEWED CALL FOR COAL STUDIES

The Caroona Coal Action Group has renewed its call for full-scale studies before any coal mining is undertaken on the rich Liverpool Plains, south of Tamworth.

BHP-Billiton is currently test drilling for coal in the Caroona area and there's grave concern that this drilling and any subsequent mining, will damage underground aquifers.

The renewed call for further studies follows last night's A.B.C. 7.30 report, in which Natural Resources Commissioner, Dr. John Williams, said further investigations should be undertaken prior to mining.

Dr. Williams said regional and planning studies were required to ensure that no-go areas for mining were identified and where there were other areas that could be safely mined.

He said at present, there was not sufficient information available to make these judgments.

The Caroona Coal Action Group has this morning renewed its call for the State and Federal Governments to sponsor a fully independent catchment-wide surface and groundwater study of the Upper Namoi catchment area on the Liverpool Plains.

Group spokesman, Tim Duddy, says it's essential that the studies are carried out as a matter of urgency.

"The BHP-Billiton machines are already working in the area and who knows what damage they are causing.

"We must ensure mining does not destroy our environment, agricultural production, people's livelihoods, health and attachment to the land"



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“The governments have to understand that this precious agricultural resource is in danger of permanent irreparable damage and the food bowl of New South Wales must be protected.

“As BHP-Billiton has already paid the State Government over \$100 million, it is unreasonable that they will not sponsor an \$8 million study to ensure its protection,” Mr. Duddy said.

Mr. Duddy said he hoped the issue would be raised at today’s COAG meeting, where the Murray-Darling Basin would be under discussion.

FURTHER INFORMATION/COMMENT

Tim Duddy - 0427 106267
Doug Ranken - 0428 476251

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