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MEDIA RELEASE

Community tells Premier: world does not need our dirty coal

Following revelations last week that the Energy Minister is advocating for a new coal export industry for Victoria, several hundred community members met on the steps of Parliament today to show their opposition to the plan.

Green groups have been inundated with calls from community members who are furious about Peter Batchelor's support of a new proposal by Exergen to export Victoria's coal to India.

A letter sent to Premier Brumby from prominent scientists, climate change experts, and leading green and church groups opposing the establishment of a Victorian coal export industry was also released today.

Environment Victoria's campaigns director Mark Wakeham said today's protestors called on the Brumby Government to back up its climate change leadership claims.

"It's essential the Premier acts swiftly to reject this outdated proposal. If the project goes ahead, 11 million tonnes of greenhouse pollution will be pumped into the atmosphere each year, and the Latrobe Valley's necessary shift to a clean energy future will be delayed," he said.

Greenpeace climate change campaigner Julien Vincent urged the Premier to instead invest his government's efforts and resources into generating opportunities for the manufacture and export of proven renewable energy technologies.

"If the state government wants to be taken seriously on climate change, we should be hearing announcements about turning the Latrobe Valley into Victoria's renewable energy manufacturing hub," he said.

"Attempting to export 12 million tonnes per year of the world's most polluting fossil fuel is not only morally bankrupt, it is also economically short-sighted."

Cam Walker from Friends of the Earth said handing over millions of dollars worth of coal to a company that plans to export it to a country with no current cap on greenhouse pollution, was not in the public interest.

"Victoria's brown coal is wet, volatile, highly polluting and very inefficient. If the Brumby Government decides to promote this dirty fuel on the world stage, it will set our state up to be a loser in the fight against climate change," he said.

ACF climate change campaigner Owen Pascoe said a coal export industry would be damaging to international climate negotiations and would lock developing countries into a polluting future.

"Exporting brown coal is a terrible idea at a time when we need a global transition to a clean energy future," he said.

The protest was organised by Climate Action Moreland, Yarra Climate Action Now, Darebin Climate Action Now, Local's Into Victoria's Environment, Friends of the Earth and Environment Victoria.

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