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Committee Secretary
Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Old 4000

Dear Committee Secretary,

NATURE CONSERVATION (SPECIAL WILDLIFE RESERVES) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018

1. Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the Innovation, Tourism Development and Environment Committee in relation to the *Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018* (the Bill).

2. The Bimblebox Alliance Inc (TBA) is a conservation organisation that aims to protect Bimblebox and other Nature Refuges and 'Protected' Areas from coal mining and other threats to biodiversity and their ongoing existence.

3. Despite agreements with both State and Federal government departments that Bimblebox Nature Refuge would be protected in perpetuity, Clive Palmer's Waratah Coal has all of the State and Federal approvals^{1,2} except the final Mining Lease and Environmental Authority that are needed to turn Bimblebox into a 50% open-cut and 50% underground coal mine. We request that legislation be amended in this Bill to protect Bimblebox and other 'Protected' Areas from mining and other threats in perpetuity. This could be achieved through a redefinition of Special Wildlife Reserve, or an additional new class of reserve.

4. With the exception that in its present form the Bill does not protect Nature Refuges, we broadly support the concept of Special Wildlife Reserves as outlined in the Bill, although the

¹Queensland Government approval, 19 December 2013

<http://www.statedevelopment.qld.gov.au/assessments-and-approvals/galilee-coal-project.html> ;
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-12-20/clive-palmers-waratah-coal-mine-in-queensland-approved/5170474>

²Australian Federal Government approval; 18 December 2013

<http://epbcnotices.environment.gov.au/referralslist/referral-details/?id=8b737a12-4c67-e511-b4b8-005056ba00ab>; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-08-09/qld-government-approves-thermal-coal-mine-near-alpha/4876180>

scenarios described below could affect any prospective Special Wildlife Reserve.

5. Two new proposals in the Amendment of the Nature Conservation Act 1992 are counterproductive to protection of Nature Refuges and other 'Protected' Areas and should be changed or removed. Section 43B, Making a conservation agreement for special wildlife reserve, states that if there is an exploration permit over the land in the proposed area for the Special Wildlife Reserve, the Minister cannot make a conservation agreement with the landholder without written permission from the exploration permit holder. This is a good example of giving the upper hand to the miner. We cannot see Clive Palmer (Waratah Coal), who holds an exploration permit over Bimblebox, giving such permission.

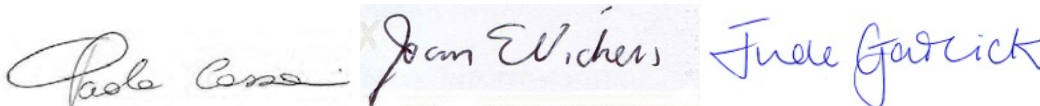
6. Section 43H, Previous use authorities in a Special Wildlife Reserve, is another good example of prioritizing the miner. 43H states that if a person was conducting a previous use of the land that was inconsistent with the conservation agreement for a Special Wildlife Reserve that person could be granted a previous use authority to carry out their pre-agreement activity for up to 3 years or until the permit for that activity expires. In 3 years of being mined for coal, Bimblebox would be destroyed. Both of these clauses comprise significant obstacles to the creation of a Special Wildlife Reserve.

7. What has happened to Bimblebox Nature Refuge has apparently served to put off many individuals and organisations from becoming involved in the Nature Refuge program, as is indicated by only 6 or so Nature Refuges being added to the list since 2014. This program is an important component of Australia's compliance with the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity's target of 17% high biodiversity coverage by 2020^{3,4}. Additional Nature Refuges could assist toward this goal, and surely should be a part of this proposed legislation. This is an opportunity to protect Nature Refuges truly in perpetuity. And we must not forget to save Bimblebox on the way.

8. Clive Palmer told Australian Financial Review on 1 March 2018 that he plans to go ahead with his \$6.5 billion coal mine later this year, regardless of Adani⁵, so Bimblebox Nature Refuge may soon need all the help it can get.

Yours sincerely,

The Bimblebox Alliance Inc
Paola Cassoni, President, Joan Vickers, Treasurer, Jude Garlick, Public Relations and Sheena Gilman, Committee Member



³United Nations 2020 target for 17% coverage with biodiverse areas:

<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/rationale/target-11/>

⁴Chair's foreword (Joe Kelly MP), Nature Conservation (Special Wildlife Reserves) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2017, Report No. 40, 55th Parliament, Agriculture and Environment Committee, August 2017

⁵Galilee Basin Coal Mines will go ahead without Adani, says Clive Palmer, Australian Financial Review, March 1, 2018 <http://www.afr.com/news/politics/galilee-basin-coal-mines-will-go-ahead-without-adani-says-clive-palmer-20180228-h0wtoc>