CUSTOMS TARIFF (URANIUM CONCENTRATE EXPORT DUTY) BILL 1980

Date Introduced: 28 February, 1980
House: House of Representatives
Presented by: Mr. Garland, Minister for Business and Consumer Affairs

Short Digest of Bill

Purpose

To introduce an export duty on uranium concentrate produced from uranium ore mined in the Alligator Rivers region in the Northern Territory.

Background

The position of Supervising Scientist, the Coordinating Committee and the Alligator Rivers Region Research Institute were established under the Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act 1978 to monitor, research and control the effects of uranium mining in the region. In addition, research and monitoring of the environmental effects of mining uranium is undertaken by Northern Territory Departments and Authorities. Under the Memorandum of Financial Understanding signed 1 July 1978 by the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments, the Commonwealth has undertaken to reimburse the Northern Territory Government for additional capital or other expenditure incurred when carrying out environmental regulatory services on behalf of the Commonwealth.

The cost of these services being carried out by the Northern Territory Government on behalf of the Commonwealth is estimated to be of the order of $3m per annum. This estimate includes initial capital costs of monitoring equipment, establishment of laboratories as well as operating costs.

Expenditure by the Office of the Supervising Scientist and associated bodies was $85,603 in 1977-78 and $809,980 in 1978-79. The budgeted estimate for 1979-80 is $1,913,000. These figures cover both capital and current expenditure.

On current estimates of exports of uranium concentrate, it is expected that the proposed duty will raise about $945,000 in the next three years. This is expected to rise to approximately $1m per annum when the
four mines in the Alligator Rivers region are in full production. This will meet approximately one fifth of expenditure undertaken by the Commonwealth Government.

Main Provisions

Clause 4 defines "Alligator Rivers Region uranium concentrate" and clause 5 imposes the export duty on that uranium concentrate so defined. Sub-clause 5(2) exempts producers of uranium concentrate from payment of the duty if the concentrate is loaded or has commenced loading before the date this Act receives Royal Assent.

Clause 6 sets the rate of export duty to be 11 cents per kilogram of anhydrous triuranium octoxide contained in the concentrate. Sub-clause 6(2) describes the way in which the weight of anhydrous triuranium octoxide is to be ascertained.

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Finance, Industries, Trade & Development Group
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE