



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS

Petition: Mentelle Basin

SPEECH

Thursday, 25 November 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 25 November 2010
Page 3921
Questioner
Speaker Marino, Nola, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms MARINO (Forrest) (9.37 am)—I table the following petition from concerned constituents in my electorate of Forrest who oppose the Labor government's decision to allow exploration for oil and gas in the Mentelle Basin.

The petition read as follows—

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives

This petition of certain citizens of Australia **draws to the attention of the House** the Federal Government's decision to allow oil and gas exploration in the Mentelle Basin, off the coast of Margaret River in Western Australia. This petition also **draws to the attention of House** the environment impacts of recent oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico and the North west of Western Australia (Montara Field).

We therefore ask the House to refer to the Government the concerns of the people of the South West of Western Australia, including the electorate of Forrest.

from 90 citizens

Petition received.

Ms MARINO—The announcement by Labor's Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, in May 2010, to allow exploration in the Mentelle Basin took many in the community by surprise. They have raised their very serious concerns with me through direct contact and through a public meeting that I held, along with the shadow minister for the environment, Greg Hunt, with the Margaret River community on 1 July. As a result we developed a three-point action plan. Of the 31 regions released for exploration by the Labor government, 30 were released at the request of industry. The release of Mentelle Basin was not requested by industry but was released on the recommendation of a government body, the Australian Geological Survey Organisation. We have sought answers from the government as to why this occurred.

The opposition are concerned, as is the community, about the government's lack of capacity to manage an oil spill in the Mentelle Basin and have questioned the government's ability to manage oil spills more generally, following the Montara oil spill in the north-west of Western Australia in late 2009.

There was a serious delay in the releasing of the Montara oil spill document. It was released only yesterday by the minister, which is interesting given the timing of this petition. What is really concerning our community is the fact that nobody can be assured that a similar incident could not or would not be handled better today or in the future.

Thirdly, the Labor Party has ignored the south-west. No Labor minister involved in this decision has come to the Forrest electorate since it was made. We invited the Prime Minister, the resources minister and the environment minister to come to Margaret River. Unfortunately for the residents in my electorate, not one of these people has accepted this invitation. As I said, this is a serious concern for people in my electorate, and I table this petition on behalf of concerned people in the south-west of my electorate.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Hon. Peter Slipper)—I understand that is in order as the petition has been approved. Before calling the Minister for Employment Participation and Childcare and Minister for the Status of Women, I gently remind the member for Forrest of the provisions of standing order 64.