

CCS Bill To Be Introduced To Parliament

The world's first framework for carbon capture and geological storage has been released by the Federal Government. Energy Minister Martin Ferguson says the draft legislation for the Offshore Petroleum Amendment (Greenhouse Gas Storage) Bill has been referred to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Primary Industries and Resources for review.

The Committee will review the provision of the draft. Specifically, it will ascertain whether the Bill: establishes legal certainty for access and property rights for the injection and long-term storage of greenhouse gases in offshore Commonwealth waters; provides a regulatory regime which will enable management of greenhouse gas injection and storage activities in a manner which responds to community and industry concerns; provides a predictable and transparent system to manage the interaction between greenhouse gas injection and storage operators with pre-existing and co-existing rights; promotes certainty for investment in injection and storage activities; and establishes a legislative framework that provides a model that could be adopted on a national basis.

Committee Chair Dick Adams says that it is an exciting prospect for the Committee to be involved in considering this world first legislation. "However there are important issues still to be resolved – such as matters of long-term liability, investment certainty, security and safety, and the management of potentially divergent interests between extracting and injecting industries – and it will be this Committee's role to bring these problems to light and identify solutions," says Adams.

The Committee was initially due to report at the end of July 2008, which has now been extended to mid August, and public submissions, originally due by 10 June, have now been extended to 30 June.

Ferguson says the framework will ensure the project will not impinge on oil and gas extraction rights. "The CO₂ capture legislation is also about making sure that we get a proper understanding between those who want to store carbon emissions as against the rights of those who want to extract oil and gas," he says. "That's one of the complicated objectives of the legislation," Ferguson adds.

[Source essa news]