



Our Ref: CTS 10926/22

Department of
Environment and Science

7 July 2022

Ms Johanna Evans
northwestpa@protonmail.com

Dear Ms Evans

Thank you for your submission received on 22 June 2022 to Honourable Scott Stewart MP, Minister for Resources regarding an application submitted by BNG (Surat) Pty Ltd (subsidiary of QGC) to amend environmental authority (EA) EPPG00839513 to authorise the use of synthetic based drilling muds. Your submission has been forwarded to the Honourable Meaghan Scanlon MP, Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs as the matter falls within Minister Scanlon's portfolio. The Minister has asked me to respond on her behalf.

You have raised concerns that QGC's EA application proposes use synthetic based drilling muds containing BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes). You have also stated that the use of BTEX is banned in Queensland and the application should be assessed as a major amendment.

I can confirm that on 5 May 2022, the Department of Environment and Science (the department) determined that the abovementioned application was a major amendment requiring public notification. I can also confirm that on 23 June 2022, BNG (Surat) Pty Ltd withdrew the application.

I would also like to clarify that the use of BTEX in stimulation processes (i.e. fracking) is restricted in Queensland under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act). However, the use of BTEX in drilling muds/fluids is not currently restricted in the same way. Under the EP Act, an applicant can apply to use BTEX in drilling fluid. As part of the application process, the applicant would be required to include an assessment of the impacts the proposal would have on the receiving environment. If such an application was made, the department would undertake a rigorous assessment of the proposal in accordance with the EP Act to ensure that it would not pose an unacceptable risk to environment values, including human health.

Should you require any further information, you may contact, Mr Daniel Spelchan, Team Leader, Energy Extractive and Southwest Compliance, Environmental Services and Regulation division of the department on telephone (07) 3330 5118 or by email at daniel.spelchan@des.qld.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Lawrence".

Rob Lawrence
Deputy Director-General
Environmental Services and Regulation