Peter Styles  
Minister for Business  

Labor conference should support Northern Territory economy and onshore gas development  

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The Minister for Business Peter Styles has urged delegates at this weekend’s Northern Territory Labor Party Conference not to be swayed by the Greens and the union left to put a ban on onshore gas.  

“The previous Labor Government supported onshore gas when it was in government by allocating over 90% of the Territory for oil and gas exploration,” Mr Styles said.  

“Now the new Labor Leader has announced an indefinite ban on onshore exploration until the next election so he can capture the Green and left vote.  

“The Government has already had some inquiries by oil and gas exploration companies with current NT exploration permits seeking advice on compensation should the Labor Party start a moratorium.  

“The Labor Party is notorious for industry-wrecking bans such as live cattle and seabed mining, which resulted in very large compensation bills being paid out to companies who had their investments ruined.  

“Are Territorians happy the leader of the Opposition will spend their taxes paying out oil and gas companies or can the leader of the Opposition assure us that won’t happen?  

“The leader of the Opposition has endorsed the CLP’s plans to generate jobs in the NT through development of the North East Gas Interconnector (NEGI) pipeline.  

“Then he announced he would ban the onshore gas industry, which will lose 6,300 future full time positions in the NT and revenue of up to $460 million a year.  

“Most of the jobs created by oil and gas will be in regional areas of the NT where unemployment is at its highest, particularly among Aboriginal Territorians.  

“The development of onshore gas would also be the first time royalties would be paid directly to the NT Government and used specifically for education.  

“The Labor Party conference this weekend is going to kill an industry that directly benefits jobs and families. As well as its own union members – welders, truckies, chippies, those in just about every trade and manufacturing sector.
“It’s amazing that Labor is imposing this ban when they know the CLP is implementing our plan to diversify the economy and overcome the boom and bust cycle which directly affects their union members.

“We all know the cap-ex of Inpex will be finishing in the next two years and this will have an impact on our economy and they are doing their best to prevent any new industries - let alone help our current workforce who are very specialised in the gas, marine and defence support industries.

“The CLP wants people to invest in the Territory but investors need certainty.

“Can the leader of the Opposition assure investors now and abandon his plans for a five year ban?

“This weekend will be the leader of the Opposition’s first big test.”

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