17 October 2008

Draft Guidelines For BHP Billiton EIS Available Tomorrow

BHP Billiton is currently planning an expansion of its Olympic Dam mine in South Australia.

As part of this proposed expansion BHP Billiton is proposing to export copper concentrate and uranium oxide through the Port of Darwin via the Adelaide to Darwin rail line.

Environment Minister Alison Anderson has determined that the proposal to transport the copper concentrate and uranium oxide through the Northern Territory and its export via the Port of Darwin are considered environmentally significant requiring formal assessment under the Environmental Assessment Act 1982. They will also be subject to the Australian Government’s Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Accordingly, BHP Billiton must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Australian, South Australian and Northern Territory governments in relation to the expansion.

Minister Anderson will tomorrow release for public comment the draft guidelines for the Territory component of the BHP Billiton EIS. Comments must be submitted by 31 October.

The environmental assessment process provides further opportunity for public comment when the draft EIS is prepared by the proponent.

The draft guidelines will be available at www.nt.gov.au/envirocomment and will be advertised in Northern Territory newspapers.

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