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Development of a shale-to-liquids industry in Australia: QER's "Myth-Busting" work

Larry Lukens, John Parsons

QER Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

Development of a commercial-scale shale-to-liquids industry in Australia has been frustrated in large part because of the inability of industry proponents to counter myths espoused by opponents. Such myths center on unsubstantiated claims around direct and indirect water usage in shale oil production, levels of greenhouse gas emissions, supposed land alienation and degradation, popular and community support for developing the industry, and the purported high energy requirements. In many instances the myths, when left un-rebutted, have had a direct impact on the development of public policy. We contend that the shale-to-liquids industry is being judged by different standards than many other industries. In this paper, we will highlight the ongoing work undertaken by Queensland Energy Resources Limited (QER) and its commissioned consultants between 2009 and 2010 to address many of the claims made by opponents of oil shale development. We will also outline the work that the company is undertaking with the Australian and Queensland Governments to further the development of the shale-to-liquids industry in Australia.