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Territory Alliance backflip risks jobs, investment and royalties

The oil and gas industry today expressed disappointment that Territory Alliance leader Terry Mills has walked away from his previous position supporting the development of the Northern Territory's natural gas resources.

APPEA Northern Territory Director Keld Knudsen said the Territory Alliance policy puts at risk the creation of thousands of jobs in the Territory, hundreds of millions of dollars in work for local companies, and a multi-decade revenue stream to the NT government.

The Territory Alliance policy also disrespects the consent and rights of Native Title holders who support onshore gas development and puts at risk their existing and future benefits and opportunities.

"We are keen to understand how and why Mr Mills' view has changed," Mr Knudsen said.

"This policy flies in the face of the key findings of the Scientific Inquiry into Hydraulic Fracturing – and 13 other inquiries nationally – that concluded any risks associated with onshore gas development and hydraulic fracturing can be managed by effective regulation – which the Territory has in place.

"The backflip is staggering given Mr Mills said in January: 'If onshore gas is a viable industry in every way, then we should welcome it as a part of our economy. To do otherwise would send a message of uncertainty and governmental incompetence to all businesses right at the time when the NT is most in need of additional business investment.'

Mr Knudsen said APPEA's members stand ready to invest hundreds of millions in exploring the NT's natural gas reserves, and if exploration is successful, many times that in bringing anticipated projects to full production.

"This is exactly the sort of uncertain messaging that drives investors away right at the time when the NT is most in need of additional business investment," he said. "The broader business community should be rightly concerned about the uncertainty that policies like these create for private investment in any industry in the Territory."

"Successful exploration, appraisal and development of the Northern Territory's natural gas resources could provide significant benefits including jobs, local business opportunities, new value-adding industries, infrastructure and community investment for decades to come."

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