

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 17TH JUNE 2015

REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENTS

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:21): I have a few minutes left in regard to my contribution on this referral about regional impact statements, so I will just note the first point of the member for Goyder's motion, that the house:

Supports the referral to the Economic and Finance Committee of all regional impact statements, and the ability to call witnesses.

I continue my remarks from the previous occasion in this place. It is not every day you get a good news story in your region, but the United Dairy Power plant in Murray Bridge has got back into gear with new owners and it is very pleasing to see. I have had a conversation with the Minister for Agriculture, and I am sure he is pleased as well with the events that have happened in Murray Bridge, not only because they will strengthen the local community at there but also because the Beston Global Food Company has shown faith not just in the region but in the South Australian dairy industry.

They will have to go through a process of bringing milk back in because, when United Dairy Power went into receivership, there was a worry about the milk having to go somewhere, and I must congratulate Parmalat and Warrnambool Cheese & Butter for getting on board immediately with that. This is great news for South Australia. The Adelaide-based Beston Global Food Company have come to the rescue and are buying the company, with the two plants at Jervois in South Australia, out of receivership. They want to deliver not only this milk to South Australia but also products to Asia, which is great for export in this state.

This company is headed by Dr Roger Sexton AM. He has built a portfolio of investments with a view of taking premium clean, green Australian food and beverage products into global markets and, as I indicated, particularly China and Asia. When he established the company, his aim was to take healthy eating to the world's growing communities with Australia's best foods. He made the following comment in his press release:

Being able to purchase and revitalise United Dairy Power is a win-win. BGFC has secured additional dairy resources to feed its growing overseas markets. We make an even greater contribution to realising the State's food export vision, and through our investment we are adding fantastic value to a regional economy and keeping local jobs and ownership.

United Dairy Power (UDP) and the previous company's facilities have been involved in the production of cheese and other milk products for over 40 years, but sadly have only been operating at about 30 per cent capacity. The company, through Dr Sexton, want to take advantage of the dining boom in Asia, and they are going to invest considerable capital into United Dairy Power to upgrade the facilities at both Murray Bridge and Jervois and increase the production capacities. They will introduce new products for distribution into China and the ASEAN region via their subsidiaries based in Thailand, Vietnam, China and Brunei. I might be destroying the minister's ministerial statement, but that's fine.

The Hon. L.W.K. Bignell: That's alright. It's good bipartisan support.

Mr PEDERICK: Yes. Under the ownership of the Beston group, the company name will change to Beston Pure Foods to reflect the broader scope of the dairy-based food products to be produced at Murray Bridge and Jervois. It is noted that BGFC has created a range of natural, clean and green products which capitalise on the intrinsic benefits of South Australia as a premium food producer. These products will include high probiotic yoghurt and milk drinks, nutritional supplements and organic beverages, all of which are in high demand in Asia and will be progressively introduced into production at Murray Bridge and Jervois over the next three years.

I congratulate the Beston foods group. This is fantastic news for my area, to get those jobs back in, as we lost over 100 jobs recently. I note I have worked with ministers over time but, sadly, we have not been able to negotiate stamp duty exemption or payroll tax exemption for other companies, but I am pleased to see that Dr Sexton's group have just come in with all guns blazing. They are going to make this a huge asset for the region and South Australia and for our dairy export growth. So, that is a fantastic impact on our regional economy. You cannot come in here and say that every day, but I am so pleased as the local member and so pleased for the betterment of the South Australian dairy industry.