

New Hope urged to drop legal action

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ENVIRONMENTALIST lawyers have called on New Hope to drop their legal challenges after the Queensland Environment Department refused to amend New Acland's mine's environmental authority.

New Hope yesterday confirmed the department would not give the mine's stage three expansion environment approval.

The decision is a major blow for New Hope and

comes after the Queensland Land Court recommended the government not approve the expansion. New Hope has launched a judicial review in the Queensland Supreme Court.

The company has previously warned refusing the approval would cause major economic impacts in Oakey, Toowoomba and across southeast Queensland.

Speaking in Brisbane,

Environmental Defenders Office lawyer Jo Bragg said the department's decision

was a major win for farmers and anti-mining activists.

"We urge New Acland to do the right thing and drop the judicial review of the Land Court decision," she said.

Ms Bragg said the departmental decision was a win for opponents to mines across the state.

But New Hope managing director Shane Stephan said New Hope would fight to secure the 700 jobs that rely on the expansion.

"New Hope Group was today advised by the

Queensland Department of Environment and Science that it has decided to refuse the application to amend the environmental authority for the New Acland Coal Mine Stage Three project," he said.

"We are disappointed with this outcome and are considering our options in

response.

"As previously advised a Judicial Review of the Land Court decision is underway.

"The company is committed to securing approval for this project and

in doing so being able to provide ongoing employment for the circa 700 jobs reliant on the Project."

The judicial review is expected to return to court next month. -

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