

## TN coal bed methane project: Great Eastern says will take steps to protect interest

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nixed project on  
protests by farmers

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Great Eastern Energy Corporation (GEECL) has said it will "take all steps under law" to protect its interests in the Coal Bed Methane (CBM) project in Tamil Nadu.

Last week the State Government decided against giving the go-ahead to Great Eastern's project for exploration and production of CBM in Thanjavur and Thiruvarur districts.

This decision was based on recommendations of an expert technical committee, appointed on June 30, 2014, fol-

lowing protests by farmers against the project in the Cauvery Delta Districts. Responding to a query from *BusinessLine*, the company said it "is compliant with all rules and regulations under law. The alleged report has not reached GEECL yet, hence we won't be able to comment on the same without verifying its content."

### 'Allegations baseless'

On media reports stating that some data was not submitted by the company and its Environmental Impact Assessment report did not contain the same, GEECL said, "These allegations are untrue and are vehemently denied."

Our EIA report is compliant with all conditions under the Terms of Reference pre-

scribed by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change."

### Study findings

The government order, which quoted several points from the study by the Committee (headed by the Chairman of the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board), recommended the project "may either be rejected or reviewed" due to various implications.

The company has not done a cost benefit analysis of the project including gas value, consumer data, cost of alternative fuel, growth in vehicle population, and the socio economic impact and damage to environment, the report stated.

It added that the Environmental Impact Assessment

study lacks a "vital information" and a detailed study is needed to cover the missing data.

The Committee also said that over 1,800 daily wage, unskilled persons can work in the fields, but the company can provide jobs to 1,000 skilled or semi-skilled workers.

The project can support a 450 MW power plant for 25 years, which is not much, considering the adverse impacts.

Great Eastern's project was allocated the Mannargudi Block in 2010 by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

In January 2011, the then DMK-led Government had entered into an agreement with the company to facilitate the project.