



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 684 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mrs A T Lovemore (DA); is attached for your consideration.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE:

26/3/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED ~~AMENDED~~

MS B P SONJICA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE:

23/03/2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 684

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 15 MARCH 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7)

684. Mrs A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) What steps is she taking to ensure compliance by water service authorities with Regulation 5, which regulates the quality of potable water, of the Regulations Relating to Compulsory National Standards and Measures to Conserve Water (details furnished);
- (2) whether all water service authorities maintain an adequate sampling programme as required by Regulations 5(1) and 5(2); if not, (a) which water service authorities do not maintain an adequate sampling programme and (b) what action has her department taken to rectify the situation;
- (3) whether all water service authorities inform her department of noncompliance with drinking water quality requirements as required by Regulation 5(4); if not, what action does her department take to detect incidences of unreported noncompliance; if so, what action does her department take to ensure (a) compliance and (b) communication with consumers;
- (4) (a) why the Drinking Water Quality Regulation section of her department's website indicates only microbiological compliance with requirements, (b) when will the site be upgraded to allow for a search for any determinant included in the SA National Drinking Water Standard (SANS) 241: 2005 and (c) how can a consumer currently obtain information on the drinking water quality supplied to him or her;
- (5) whether her department enforces the annual reporting of the water quality sampling programme by water service authorities as required by Regulation 10(f); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of this enforcement programme?

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REPLY:

- (1) My Department initiated the Drinking Water Quality Regulation program in 2005 which raised the profile of tap water quality significantly at municipal level. This initiative started with the roll-out of an electronic water quality management system to all municipalities which served as a drinking water quality management system and reporting mechanism to My Department. This allowed for constant performance monitoring. This initiative obtained global recognition by the International Water Association (IWA) in 2008. A limitation in this process is that it only depends on municipal responses and therefore it was deemed necessary to take another step by means of audits which led to the incentive-based regulation programme, known as Blue Drop Certification,
- (2)(a) Yes, all municipalities now have monitoring programs in place although such programs range from poor to excellent. What is encouraging is that there has been constant improvement since 2004 when only 50% of municipalities had monitoring programmes in place.
- (2)(b) My Department through its Blue Drop Certification programme is facilitating effective drinking water quality management as a proactive measure.

- (3)(a) Yes, My Department receives notifications of non-compliances. In instances when the Department detects significant failures and municipalities failed to issue notifications, the Department engages with such local authorities to issue public notifications of the adverse water quality situation.
- (3)(b) It is the primary objective of My Department to ensure that upon confirmation, the affected communities are informed. A latest case in this regard is the drinking water situation in Madibeng Local Municipality in the Hartbeespoort area where a "boil water" notice was issue shortly after the Department's intervention. This notification will remain relevant until such time that the Department is assured that effective measures are in place.
- (4)(a) The Drinking Water Quality Regulation weblink provides credible information to the public from the Blue Drop System (BDS) on all relevant water quality constituency categories i.e. Microbiological, Chemical, Physical and Organoleptic (as per the national standard, SANS 241:2006 requirements).
- (4)(b) The web page does include all scientific constituency categories. However, this webpage will be upgraded soon to ensure it becomes more user-friendly.
- (4)(c) On the same web link a "My Water" feature is was introduced from 17 March 2010 which allows for information on drinking water quality trends to be communicated to the general public.
- (5) Yes, the Blue Drop Certification program requires regular reporting as per Regulation 5 under Section 9 of the Water Services Act (Act 108 of 1997). My Department receives regular drinking water quality reports from all Water Services Authorities.