



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA




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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES: QUESTION 74 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr H B Groenewald (DA-NW); is attached for your consideration.


DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)
DATE: 11/3/10


DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/ AMENDED


MS BP SONJICA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 12.03.2010

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 74

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 05 MARCH 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 4)

74. Mr H B Groenewald (DA-NW) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

Whether any action is being taken with regard to the (a) sewage flowing into the dam and (b) high levels of E-Coli in the water supply in the Madibeng Municipality in the North West; if not, why not in each case; if so, what are the relevant details in each case?

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REPLY:

- (a) My Department has continuously engaged the Madibeng Municipality with regards to raw sewage spillages as well as other forms of water pollution within their area. Recent site visits indicated that the sanitation infrastructure within the municipality is failing; with a number of pump stations in the area failing and blockages are resulting in overflowing manholes. In April 2009, My Department offered financial support to the Madibeng Municipality to de-silt the old Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) which could have increased the capacity of the works and improved the quality of the effluent. The municipality was supposed to write to My Department indicating how the funds were to be utilised, but this unfortunately never happened. My Department however continued to work with the municipality in providing input into the drafting of an Action Plan to address the WWTW problems. The Action Plan was however not followed through due to financial constraints.

My Department issued a pre-directive instructing the municipality to correct the situation at the Brits WWTW; but this action also failed to elicit a positive response. This was followed by a directive on 1 July 2009 instructing the municipality to comply with the regulation standards for WWTW in terms of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998). The municipality's continued failure to comply with the directive compelled My Department to lay criminal charges against the Municipal Manager on 7 January 2010. The pump station failures that occurred around the Hartbeespoort Dam in February 2010 necessitated my Department to assist the municipality by availing technicians. As a result, the pump stations are currently not overflowing, although the WWTW still require further attention. My Department will also assist the municipality in conducting a comprehensive assessment of the WWTW and in the revision of the Action Plan.

- (b) Investigations by My Department revealed that the pollution of potable water within Madibeng Municipality is the resultant of the failure of the water purification works to meet the growing demand for water. This led to the drastic decrease of water stored in the reservoirs and caused the settled sediments to be drawn into the drinking water reticulation system, resulting in aesthetic problems.

On 17 February 2010, My Department instructed the Madibeng Municipality to issue notices regarding the state of their drinking water to the affected areas and to clean the affected reservoirs. Such a notice has been issued by the Mayor of the municipality and actions to clean up the reservoir have commenced. My Department took water samples at the Hartbeespoort Water Purification Works for laboratory analysis of chemical and microbiological parameters on 24 February 2010.

The results of the analysis indicated that both the total Coli forms and E-coli were within acceptable limits, which means the water from the works is safe to drink although reservoirs still need to be cleaned and disinfected.

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