

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 56

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 1)

56. Mr M M Swathe (DA) to ask the Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry:

- (1) Whether the report by the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR), which revealed seepage of mining chemicals into the country's water supply, will be made available to the public; if not, why not; if so, when;
- (2) whether her department has taken any action to address the problems raised in this report; if not, why not; if so, what action?

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REPLY:

- (1) It is unclear which report the Honourable Member is referring to in this question. There are two reports from the National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) regarding the radioactive contamination of the Wonderfontein Spruit. The latest report produced by the NNR in terms of the radiological contamination of the Wonderfontein Spruit is commonly referred to as the Brenk Report of 2007. This report has been made available to the public and can still be accessed from the NNR website at www.nnr.co.za/documents.

Another report has recently been commissioned by the NNR based on the analysis of three vegetable and two fish samples from the Mooi River/Wonderfontein Spruit area. This report called the "Report of Analysis" has been compiled by the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA) and can be obtained from the NNR.

- (2) As stated above, it is unclear which report is being referred to. However, based on the latest two reports, mentioned above, several initiatives have been undertaken as part of a co-operative agreement between the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and the NNR.

An intergovernmental committee called the Steering Committee for Remediation of Mining Related Radioactive Contamination (SCRMRRRC) has been established for the co-ordination of such remediation on a national level. The Wonderfontein Spruit Catchment Area has been identified as a priority area for remediation and therefore the Wonderfontein Spruit Catchment Area Project Technical Working Group (WCAPTWG) was established through the SCRMRRRC in order to address specific clean-up actions.

The WCAPTWG has already met and is in the process of appointing a team of specialists who will identify and rank hot spot areas targeted for remedial action. This team of specialists will also provide the regulators with a remediation plan for the identified hotspots.

The regulators intend to embark on the clean-up action in collaboration with the mining interest group in the area.