



## water & forestry

Department:  
Water Affairs and Forestry  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: NA Q324

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 324 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 15/07/09

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE: 17. 07. 2009

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 324

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 03 JULY 2009  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 5)

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

- (1) Whether our ground water resources are being monitored for nitrate levels; if not, why not; if so, what monitoring is currently taking place;
- (2) what (a) were the results of nitrate monitoring of ground water in the past year and (b) action has been taken to ensure that water with nitrate levels greater than 10mg/l is not drunk by humans or animals?

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REPLY:

- (1) Currently there is a national network of 380 points where the quality of groundwater is being sampled and analysed on a six monthly basis. The analyses are for macro elements, i.e. Calcium, Magnesium, and Sodium, Chlorides, Nitrates, Sulphates, Fluoride, Iron and Silica. The data gathered provide the Department with insight into temporal changes in the groundwater quality due to natural conditions. Changes on a local scale which could be due to pollution are not yet monitored.

On top of the above network, the departmental database (Water Management System [WMS]) contains about 50 000 points where *ad hoc* samples are taken and analysed (mostly again for macro elements). This data set gives a broader view of the general quality of South Africa's groundwater. The Hydrogeological map series show known problem spots which may require closer attention.

- (2)(a) The need for more effective municipal monitoring of chemical macro-determinants has been identified by the Department and this has necessitated the need for the (current) revision of the South African National Standard (SANS 241:2006). The revision will see that detailed annual monitoring will inform the compliance monitoring programme on all the water quality risks that require control measures to be in place. The revised standard is in the process of revision, and is about to be submitted by the technical committee for approval by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS) before roll-out procedures will commence.

(2)(b) Thus far the Department has been engaging with responsible institutions such as Sedibeng Water in the North West Province to ensure that the risks of nitrate consumption is minimised. Subsequent to this intervention boreholes with excessive nitrate levels were sealed and alternative boreholes were allocated for the affected communities.