



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 1252 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: 7/5/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 10/05/2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1252

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16 APRIL 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 11)

1252 Mrs A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) (a) What criteria are taken into account when a water licence is issued and (b) what source(s) of information is/are utilised to assess the effect of water use on a water resource when an application for a water user licence is being processed;
- (2) whether her department is able to issue water use licences without any ensuing negative impact on a water resource; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) The factors prescribed in Section 27 of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, are taken into account in the assessment of water use licence applications.

Factors relating to the effect of water uses on the water resource include the class and the resource quality objectives of the water resource and the quality of water in the water resource that may be required for the Reserve and for meeting international obligations.

The factors considered also include existing lawful uses, the redress of past discrimination, efficient and beneficial use of water in the public interest, the socio-economic impact of the water use or the failure to authorise the water use, any catchment strategy and the strategic importance of the water use.

Licences are issued in consultation with other Departments or with their cooperation and their records of decisions are considered.

- (1)(b) The information that my Department uses in licence application assessment depends on the water use and on the potential impacts.

My Department uses information obtained from licence application forms, Reserve determination studies, the National Water Resource Strategy, Internal Strategic Perspective documents, groundwater harvest potential maps, environmental authorisation reports, environmental management plans, Integrated Water and Waste Management Plans, Best Practice Guidelines for Water Resource Protection in the South African Mining Industry, specialist studies on the baseline environmental state and on expected impacts, hydrological and geohydrological studies on water availability and impacts, registered water use, designs of water engineering works and inputs by interested and affected persons.

- (2) My Department is not able to issue water use licences without any negative impact on the water resource as every water use necessarily has some impact on the resource, either from a reduction of flow, changing groundwater levels, increased concentrations of pollutants or disturbance of the watercourse ecology.

However, my Department only issues water use licences with conditions that limit the impacts to acceptable levels.

These levels are determined by resource directed measures and the needs of other lawful water users. Resource directed measures (the Reserve, classification of water resources and resource quality standards) provide the means to determine and maintain the water quality and quantity required to protect aquatic and associated ecosystems and their biological diversity in rivers, wetlands, estuaries and groundwater, in order to secure ecologically sustainable development and use of the water resource.

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