



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2010 -06- 03

PRIVATE BAG X313
PRETORIA 0001

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 1693 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: 2/6/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 04. 06. 2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1693

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28 MAY 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 15)

1693. Mrs A T Lovemore (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether a regional assessment has been carried out on the impact of coal mining on the water resources within the Vaal, Usutu and Komati River catchment areas; if not, (a) why not and (b) when will such an assessment be carried out; if so, what are the details of the assessment;
- (2) whether, in the absence of an assessment, she will continue to grant water use licences for coal mining operations within the above catchment areas; if so, what are the relevant details; if not,
- (3) whether she will place a moratorium on water use licence approvals until such an assessment is carried out; if not, why not; if so, when;
- (4) whether a limit has been placed on the number of licences that may be issued in the area; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the details of this limit and (b) what mechanism is utilised to assess applications for such water use licences?

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) No, a regional assessment has not been carried out on the impact of the coal mines on the Komati System, however a Catchment Management Strategy is being developed and the envisaged assessment will be guided by the outcome of the Catchment Management Strategy.
- (1)(b) Following the completion of the Catchment Management Strategy, the extent of the assessment will be guided and identified.
- (2) Yes, the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998) does not discriminate on the issuing of licenses to applicants; however, it must be noted that before issuing of a water use licenses, as the Minister, I have to consider what will be the Best Practicable Environmental Option, impacts and mitigation measures as well as other important tools such as the Mpumalanga Biodiversity and Conservation Plan.
- (3) No, there is no indication at the moment that the technology used for coal mining and the mitigation measures requires a moratorium on issuing water use licenses.
- (4)(a) No, there are no limits being placed on issuing of licenses, as every license is being evaluated on its own merit for approval. The delegated authority has to make a decision (taking into cognisance the tools mentioned in paragraph 2 above) on whether to issue a license or not.

- (4)(b) Mechanisms used to assess water use license Applications include amongst others,
- National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998),
 - Environmental impact assessments (EIAs),
 - Environmental management plan reports (EMPRs),
 - Best Practice Guidelines for the Mining Industry,
 - Internal Strategic Perspective for the catchment involved and
 - Any other strategy and best practice available.

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