



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2010 -08- 13

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 2063 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mrs J F Terblanche (DA); is attached for your consideration.


DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 11/8/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 2010/08/14

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2063

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 06 AUGUST 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 19)

2063. Mrs J F Terblanche (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) On what date was a water use licence issued to a certain company (name furnished) for the building of a centralised tailing storage facility near Klerksdorp;
- (2) whether, prior to the issuing of the licence, any consideration was given to possible soil contamination through seepage of (a) radio nuclides and (b) heavy metals from the proposed facility; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether the predicted effects of the facility on groundwater have been verified; if not, why not; if so, what are the (a) findings and (b) further relevant details;
- (4) whether the environmental impact assessment of the facility has predicted any negative impact on the Vaal River; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what (a) are the relevant details and (b) measures will be put in place to rectify the situation?

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REPLY:

- (1) The water use license was issued to Mine Waste Solution on 11 June 2010.
- (2)(a) Yes; prior to the issuing of the license, consideration was given to potential soil contamination through seepage of radio nuclides. According to the mathematical models and information contained in a detailed Radiological Public Safety Assessment Report for the proposed Mine Waste Solutions Tailings Storage Facility (TSF), the potential of seepage of radio nuclides and the potential resultant impact is negligible and manageable.
- (2)(b) Yes; prior to the issuing of the license, consideration was given to potential soil contamination through seepage of heavy metals and other constituents from the proposed new Mine Waste Solutions TSF. According to a compiled Geohydrological Report, contamination through seepage of heavy metals and the potential resultant impacts is negligible and manageable.
- (3)(a) Yes, the predicted effects of the facility on groundwater have been verified by means of detailed numerical modelling that was conducted as part of the groundwater study. The findings of the study indicated that the effects of the facility will have a minimal detrimental impact to groundwater due to the geology and the fact that the TSF must be lined.
- (3)(b) My Department will ensure (based upon the outcome of the recalibration of the model) that additional monitoring boreholes and monitoring points will be established to address areas of potential concern where due to the lack of sufficient information over time, knowledge gaps may become evident.

- (4)(a) No, the detailed groundwater study referred to in paragraph (3)(a) above, indicated that any potential pollution plume associated with the proposed new facility is extremely unlikely to reach the Vaal River and that any impacts (if any) will be insignificant even in the longer term (100 years plus).

It should be noted that the study confirmed that removing a total of 14 point sources of historic pollution and seepage situated on dolomite and reprocessing and locating such on the proposed new facility off dolomites will have a net positive effect on water quality in the Vaal River.

- (4)(b) Falls away.

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