



water affairs

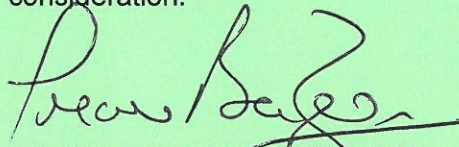
Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 2433 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

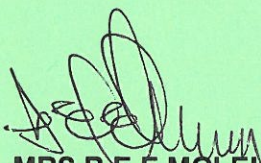
A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr P F Smith (IFP); is attached for your consideration.



ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 15/12/2010

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED



MRS B E E MOLELWA, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DATE: 2010/12/14

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2433

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 3 SEPTEMBER 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)

2433. Mr P F Smith (IFP) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether there has been routine dumping of radioactive waste into the Crocodile River over decades; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, (a) how much waste has been dumped, (b) what (i) is and (ii) was the legality of this practice and (c) what (i) is and (ii) has been the consequences of this practice on the Hartbeespoort Dam's water quality;
- (2) Whether her department has taken any steps to stop this practice; if not, why not; if so, what steps;
- (3) Whether underground waste containing uranium water from worked-out gold mines is percolating towards the dam; if so,
- (4) Whether her department has commissioned a risk assessment; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (5) Whether the percolation can be stopped; if not, what will the effect of the percolation be on the future water quality of the dam; if so, what are the relevant details?
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REPLY:

- (1) The Department is not aware of routine dumping of radioactive waste into the Crocodile River. However, the Department issued the Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA) an authorisation in terms of section 21(f) of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No 36 of 1998) to dispose treated effluent (which contain traces of radio-active material) into the Crocodile River less than 5km upstream from the Hartbeespoort Dam.

NECSA discharges effluent within the limit of 25 Giga Becqueurels per annum per annum (G Bq/year) and the consequence of this activity on the Hartbeespoort Dam is considered to be within the acceptable standard.

- (1)(a) Falls away
- (1)(b) Falls away
- (1)(c)(i) Falls away
- (1)(c)(ii) Falls away
- (2) Falls away

- (3) No, there is no scientific evidence to show that any underground waste containing uranium water percolates towards the Hartbeespoort Dam. The underground wastewater emanating from the worked-out gold mines is confined to specific zones and impervious sub-surface geological barriers prevent the wastewater from percolating towards the Hartbeespoort Dam.
- (4) Although the Department has not conducted any risk assessment study to determine risk of uranium in the Hartbeespoort Dam, NECSA conducts annual risk assessment of their final effluent and the results are submitted to the Department as part of the authorisation conditions.
- (5) Falls away

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