



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 386 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above-mentioned question asked by Mr G R Morgan (DA); is attached for your consideration.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 3/3/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE: 20.0.03.09

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 386

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 26 FEBRUARY 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 4)

386. Mr G R Morgan (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) (a) What are the current locations where acid mine water is decanting in Gauteng, (b) into which water courses are they decanting, (c) what is the size of the decant each day, (d) how many (i) people and (ii) farming operations are (aa) directly and (bb) indirectly affected by the decanting at each of these locations and (e) how was these figures arrived at;
- (2) whether efforts are being made to warn people about the dangers of using water from water courses into which acid mine water has decanted; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether steps are being taken to (a) reduce and (b) treat the decant at each of these sites; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) Acid mine water is currently decanting from two derelict mine shafts in the Mogale City (Krugersdorp) / Randfontein area.
- (1)(b) The decanting water is entering the upper part of the Tweelopies Spruit, which is a tributary of the Crocodile River in the Crocodile West catchment.
- (1)(c) Based on the February 2010 figures, the average decant volume is 16 megalitres per day with a peak volume of 30 megalitres per day during the high rainfall season. On a low rainfall season, and subject to the mining companies engaging in their routine pumping and treatment schedule, the volume of decanting acid mine water is reduced to zero.
- (1)(d)(i)(aa) In terms of drinking water, no persons are directly affected by the decanting acid mine water. People around the area either use water from the Rand Water or alternative water sources.
- (1)(d)(ii)(aa) In terms of drinking water, there are no farmers directly affected by the decanting acid mine water. The farmers either use water from the Rand Water or alternative water sources. There is no known farming activity that uses the affected water for irrigation.

- (1)(d)(ii)(bb) There are two farms that may indirectly be affected by the decanting acid mine water entering the groundwater. However, these farms do not make use of the groundwater.
- (1)(e) The magnitude of the decant per day is determined by continuous engagement with interested and affected parties through the Western Basin Void Technical Group.
- (2) My Department disseminates the relevant information and also addresses concerns regarding the decanting water through the Western Basin Void Technical Group which comprises of My Department, other organs of state as well as interested and affected parties.
- (3)(a) In view of the potential for acid mine drainage to emanate from mines in the Witwatersrand, a Public Private Partnership with the mining companies is presently being considered for the management of mine water in the area. Furthermore, in an attempt to minimise the volume of decanting acid mine water during the high rainfall season and to prevent decanting in the dry season, the relevant West Rand mining companies have implemented acid mine water pumping and treatment operations.
- (3)(b) In 2005, My Department apportioned liabilities between the relevant mines in the West Rand for the pumping and treatment of mine water having the potential to decant as acid mine drainage. Over and above the routine pumping and treatment processes of the two mining companies concerned, the neutralisation of the acidic water under emergency conditions is undertaken through doses of non-hazardous alkaline material.