



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 685 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: 25/5/10

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 25/05/2010

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 685

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 15 MARCH 2010
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 7)

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

- (1) Whether she has been informed of the levels of heavy metals, including aluminium, in the water supplied to the residents of Grahamstown and surrounds that exceed the levels permitted for class I and II in terms of the SA National Drinking Water Standard (SANS) 241: 2005; if so, (a) what are the relevant details for the levels of each heavy metal exceeding the requirements and (b) for what period has the level of each specified heavy metal exceeded the levels required for class I and II water;
- (2) (a) when has she been informed of the noncompliance at issue and (b) what reasons were supplied by the water service authority for the noncompliance;
- (3) whether the health risks were communicated to the water consumers; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details of this communication? NW811E

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) Yes, my Department has been informed of the concern for heavy metals, including aluminum at Grahamstown. With regards to the Waainek and the James Kleinhans Water Treatment Works which make use of aluminum sulphate and a poly-electrolyte respectively as the flocculants; it should be noted that my Department's monitoring indicates the following:
 - The levels of aluminum at the Waainek Water Treatment Works (WTW) ranged from 0.6 to 0.9 mg/l thus exceeding Class I and Class II (0.5 mg/l) quality limits specified in SANS 0214. Further, the only other heavy metal with elevated levels was iron, and that was marginally over class I.
 - No problems were found at the James Kleinhans WTW.
- (1)(b) The problem is intermittent. In 2007, similar problems were experienced and my Department sent a specialist from Umgeni Water to evaluate and assist the Makana Municipality and satisfactory levels were subsequently achieved.
- (2)(a) As indicated in paragraph 1(b) above, the problem is intermittent.
- (2)(b) Normally, the Waainek WTW supplies water to the Western half of Grahamstown including the central business district, Rhodes University and industrial area. However, due to the drought, the James Kleinhans WTW is supplying water to most of Grahamstown, with only the high lying areas (Industrial sites) being supplied from Waainek WTW.

The Makana Municipality reported that due to the drought they are forced to limit the volume of water treated at Waainek and to operate the WTW on a stop-go basis. They acknowledged having a lack of skilled process controllers and accurate dosage of chemicals was difficult under the reduced and intermittent operating conditions.

- (3) Yes, the Makana Municipality as Water Services Authority communicated with their consumers through public meetings and newspaper reports. My Department informed the Makana Municipality in writing of the non-compliance and provided support from its Emergency Response Forum to develop an action plan to restore effective operation and control of water services in Grahamstown.

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