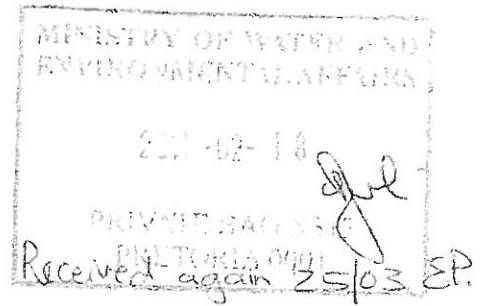




water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Enquiries: M Brisley
Telephone: 018 386 9547
Reference: 2/1/5/1/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 167 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

A copy of a similar reply to this question is attached for your information as reply question 2433.


ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL

DATE: 19/02/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 25.03.2011

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 167

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10 FEBRUARY 2011
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 01)

167. 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.

Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (NECSA) discharges effluent within the limit of 25 Giga Becquerel's 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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