



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA




[edke]

Enquiries: Mr M Matlala
Telephone: 012 336 7860
Reference: 2/1/5/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

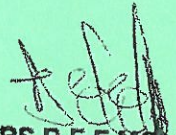
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 3642 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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


ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 6/12/2011


DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 20/12/12

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO. 3642

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 18 NOVEMBER 2011
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 40)

3642. Mr G R Morgan (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) With reference to her reply to question 2977 on 24 October 2011, (a) what are the details of the international reports on fracking that her department has been following and (b) who in her department is responsible for following the said reports;
- (2) why has the (a) diminution of aquifers and (b) contamination of water been identified as major concerns to her and her department;
- (3) what (a) international networks has her department been using to distinguish between sound technical and sensationalist reports and (b) are the details of the fracking-related reports that her department considers to be technically sound;
- (4) whether her department intends to develop a policy in relation to fracking; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) The Department has studied various reports as part of the Petroleum Agency of South Africa (PASA) Working Group set up by the Department of Mineral Resources. These reports include the USA Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reports, the 90 Day report of the Subcommittee on Shale and Hydraulic Fracturing report to the Secretary of the Energy Advisory Board, and the Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports to mention but a few. Technical papers and reports from Canada, Europe and Australia, where hydraulic fracturing for shale gas development is taking place, have also been consulted.
- (1)(b) There are several experts in the Department with a lot of experience in water resources protection and management; however, the entry point is Mr Helgard Muller, acting Deputy Director-General: Policy and Regulation, is the team coordinator.
- (2) The diminution of aquifers and contamination of water resources in general are the major concerns because they are the major observed/identified risks involved that affect the mandate of the Department.
- (3) The United States Geological Survey (USGS), the EIA and the EPA are some of the international networks that the Department is using through the PASA Working Group because of the professional and unbiased track record of these entities.
- (4) The Department has the National Water Act, 1998 (Act 36 of 1998) as its tool but there is also a process currently being explored to check if it adequately covers hydraulic fracturing and, if not, what needs to be done to ensure adequate control.

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