



## water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 686 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 28/03/2011

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE: 29-3-2011

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 686

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 07 MARCH 2011  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 04)

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

- (1) With reference to a certain report (name furnished), to what extent has ingress control of water into the Western, Eastern and Central Basins already been implemented prior to the publication of this report;
- (2) whether any consideration was given to using the existing water treatment plant that was erected by Mintails on the West Rand and which is currently idle, to treat mine water; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) how does her department intend to reduce the costs of dealing with acid mine drainage;
- (4) whether, in the response to the acid mine drainage problem, the principle of polluter pays will be adhered to, as enshrined in the National Environmental Management Act, Act 107 of 1998; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW736E

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**REPLY:**

- (1) In accordance with the hierarchy of water management actions contained in the Department's Best Practice Guidelines, the reduction of water ingress into mines are given a high priority. Measures currently implemented by existing mines which contribute to the prevention of ingress include: on-site storm water management, lined dams that prevent seepage and ingress into mine voids, runoff containment from tailings storage facilities and deposition of tailings into abandoned pits to minimise ingress. The latter is currently practised in the Western Basin and other abandoned pits are being considered. The Florida Canal project that is currently in progress will significantly reduce water ingress into the Central Basin.
- (2) Yes, the Department will consider the use of existing infrastructure when implementing the engineering solutions for dealing with the Acid Mine Drainage (AMD).
- (3) In implementing an engineering solution for dealing with the AMD the Department will implement the most cost effective solution (including capital cost and operations and maintenance costs). Steps will also be taken to reduce the ingress of surface water and groundwater into the underground mine voids. This will reduce the volumes of water which need to be pumped and treated and consequently reduce the operational cost of AMD management.
- (4) Yes, the Department will be implementing the provision of Section 19 and 20 of the National Water Act.

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