



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EdST

Enquiries: A Abrahams
Telephone: 053 830 8800
Reference: 2/1/5/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 1237 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

W. Sinyo

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 18/05/2012

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/~~AMENDED~~

B. E. Molewa

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

DATE: 20/05/12

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1237

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11 MAY 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12)

1237. Mr G R Morgan (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) With reference to her reply to question 468 on 19 March 2012, what is the current status of the water licence application process for the PMG mine in the Northern Cape;
- (2) whether any other enforcement steps have been taken against the mine in terms of National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, since the pre-notice was issued against the mine in July 2010; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) in view of the fact that the mine had not even applied to the Department of Water Affairs for a water user licence by 19 March 2012, why has the department not issued a directive to the mine to desist from using and discharging any water;
- (4) what (a) are the dates of the last three visits by officials of the Department of Water Affairs to the mine and (b) are the (i) names and (ii) designations of the officials who conducted the visits in each case;
- (5) whether her department has any concerns about the way in which the mine is using and discharging water; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW1434E

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REPLY:

- (1) An incomplete water use license application was submitted to the Department's Regional Office: Northern Cape and an initial assessment was conducted. Further technical information was requested in a letter dated 3 May 2012, however, the Department is still awaiting submission of this information by the applicant.

A site inspection has been arranged for 4 June 2012 to further discuss and clarify the additional information requirements with the applicant in order to facilitate the water use license application process.

- (2) No further enforcement steps were taken against the PMG Mine (the Mine) since the July 2010 pre-notice as the mine committed (in a detailed action plan dated 2 August 2010) to addressing the key issues listed in the pre-notice. In compliance with the action plan, the mine has conducted several specialist studies, including a detailed geo-hydrological report and storm water management plan, in support of the water license application process. Furthermore, during a joint site inspection conducted by the Department and the Department of Mineral Resources officials on 20 July 2011, it was confirmed that the mine had implemented the following remedial measures:
 - the construction of a vehicle wash bay;
 - discontinuation of water use from boreholes on site; and
 - sourcing alternative water from Sedibeng Water as proposed in the action plan.

- (3) The mine demonstrated a willingness to cooperate and implemented several measures, as stipulated in response (2) above, to minimise its impacts on the water resource hence a directive was not issued. The success of the Department in dealing with unlawful water use should not only be gauged in terms of the extent to which directives are issued, but its ability to ensure that such unlawful water use is addressed through cooperation by the water user. Furthermore, an incomplete water use license application was submitted to the Department and this application will now be expedited through the Letsema Project.
- (4) Only two site visits have been conducted by the Department thus far. The table 1 below indicates the dates, names and designations of officials who conducted the last inspection at the mine:

Table 1: Names of officials and their designations

(a) Dates	(b)(i) Name of official	(b)(ii) Designation
29 May 2010	Name furnished	Senior Environmental Officer
	Name furnished	Environmental Officer (Contract)
20 July 2011	Name furnished	Environmental Officer (Contract)
	Name furnished	Environmental Officer (Contract)

- (5) The Department is concerned that the mining operations might impact negatively on the quality of groundwater resources in the immediate vicinity of the mine. The Department therefore requested a detailed groundwater investigation by the mine in order to ensure that, the impacts of the mining operation are fully understood. This will also ensure that appropriate water use license conditions are stipulated in the event that a water use license is issued to the mine.

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