



**MINISTRY
WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 1561 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

A draft reply to the above question asked by Mrs M Wenger (DA) is attached for your consideration.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE:

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 2018/07/31

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1561

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 08 JUNE 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 17)

1561. Mrs M Wenger (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether she has been informed of the World Bank Inspection Panel's Report into the Medupi Power Station (details furnished); if so, what steps has she taken with regard to the findings of the report as they relate to actions taken by (a) the Department of Environmental Affairs and (b) the Department of Water;
- (2) whether any action is being taken by these departments to rectify any items referred to in the report; if not, why not; if so, what action?

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) Regarding the findings related to the extraction of sand in the Mokolo River, an inter-departmental task team (comprising the Department of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Water Affairs, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Mineral Resources and the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism) has been established to specially investigate the sand mining activities in the Mokolo River. The task team initially met on 20 December 2011 and has met subsequently on 24 January, 7 March and 17 April 2012. The purpose of the task team is to ensure the sustainable extraction of sand from the Mokolo River through ensuring that all statutory provisions of the relevant South African Law are complied with. Furthermore, the task team will ensure that government addresses these activities in a co-ordinated manner to ensure that the principles of co-operative governance are maintained. At this stage of the task team's investigation, the focus is on the following:
- Quantifying the nature and scope of the sand mining operations and establishing the impacts on the Mokolo River system;
 - Identifying all unlawful operators along the Mokolo River in order to inform the development of an enforcement strategy.

A site visit was scheduled to take place on the 19 and 20 June 2012.

- (1)(b) Three main issues raised in the "World Bank Inspection Panel Report" are relating to water management. These issues are as follows:

- Concerns about the sustainability of water supply to existing and new users in view of new developments such as Medupi requiring large volumes of water.

The Department of Water Affairs planned the supply of water for the new developments according to the requirements laid down by the National Water Act (NWA). Reconciliation Strategies were developed and are being implemented and maintained on an ongoing basis to ensure sufficient and reliable supply of water of appropriate quality to all existing as well as future users. The reconciliation strategies, together with detailed pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies, involved extensive stakeholder consultation processes. Water will be supplied from the Crocodile River and Mokolo River and will not adversely affect existing users.

- Concerns about the impact of new developments on quality of surface and groundwater resources.

The impact of the developments on the surface and groundwater in this area, including the possibility of Acid Mine Drainage was assessed in a Water Research Commission project (Project No K5/1830//3). Due to the geology of the area coupled with the low rainfall and high evaporation, it was found that the pits of the coal mines will not rise to levels at which they will be able to decant. It will be required that developments are planned as “zero effluent” operations, which mean that no effluent will be allowed to enter the surface or groundwater in the area. License conditions require extensive safety measures and monitoring to prevent contamination of surface and groundwater resources.

- Concerns about the impact of sand mining in the Mokolo River for the construction of Medupi

The Department of Water Affairs, in recognising that protection of water resources is as important as the supply of sand to construct Medupi Power Station, directed the sand miner (Chobe -Labonte 5) to conduct further impact studies. These include Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Management Plan, Hydrological impact study, Aquatic Habitat Report, Wetlands study, and Rehabilitation Plan. The reports are being reviewed as part of Water Use License application adjudicating process.

- (2) No significant non-compliances were found at the Medupi Power Station during the Compliance Inspection conducted the Department of Environmental Affairs, the Department of Water Affairs, the Limpopo Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism on 7 December 2011.

The issues regarding the quality of sand to be supplied to Eskom will be raised in the next Environmental Management meeting to be held with Eskom. There is therefore no need to conduct a detailed compliance inspection at Medupi because the meetings are intended to deal with all issues of concern raised by the three spheres of government.

The issues relating to emissions will be managed through the comprehensive monitoring regime to be implemented by the relevant authorities who will take effect in the post-construction phase and commissioning of the power station.

The submitted Water Use License application and related studies as referred in (1)(b) above will be used as regulatory tools to mitigate or prevent any significant impacts on the Mokolo River and lawful water users. The Department of Water Affairs is working with Mokolo Water Users Association, the Department of Environmental Affairs and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis so as to monitor and enforce compliance against conditions of the Water Use Licence and other provisions of the National Water Act, Act No 36 of 1998.

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