



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EdST

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 2366 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

Attached are question 1047 and 1389 of 2010 for reference.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 05/09/2012

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

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

DATE: 2012/09/08

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2366

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 31 AUGUST 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 28)

2366. Mr G R Morgan (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) With reference to her reply to (a) question 1047 on 20 April 2010 and (b) 1389 on 20 May 2010, how have the operations of the Sishen Mine affected the flow and availability of water in the Gamogara River;
- (2) what is the current state of the boreholes and springs traditionally used by farms in the proximity of the mine due to the operations of the mine;
- (3) whether farms in the proximity of the mine and affected by the operations of the mine are receiving the water they are entitled to according to the terms of the water use licence of the mine; if not, what will be done to rectify the situation; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether any (a) notices and (b) directives have been issued against the mine for transgressing its water use licence since 20 May 2010; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) The mine is required to dewater constantly in order to allow for conventional open cast mining of the iron ore. The dewatering activities of the mine has resulted in the drawdown of groundwater levels around the mine and has negatively affected subsurface flow as well as groundwater availability in the Gamagara River. The Gamagara River is an ephemeral river, and surface water flow is therefore naturally sporadic.
- (2) The dewatering activities of the mine have resulted either in a significant drop in water levels or drying up of boreholes located in the shallow alluvial aquifer associated with the Gamagara River.
- (3) In accordance with the conditions of the mine's water use licence, farms that are affected by the mine's dewatering activities are compensated for the loss of water supply. The compensation measures are as a rule, negotiated with the specific land owner and include the drilling and equipping of alternative boreholes, the supply and installation of water storage tanks, the provision of potable water through the Vaal Gamagara Bulk Water Supply Scheme and monetary compensation or provision of alternative grazing for livestock where there are proven loss of natural grazing. In addition, affected land owners also have the option to negotiate the sale of their land with the mine should they decide to sell their farms.
- (4) No notices or directives were issued to the mine since 20 May 2010. The reason for the non-issuance of notices or directives is because the mine has been in compliance with the conditions of its water use licence.

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