



## water affairs

Department:  
Water Affairs  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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### MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION ★236 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 27/08/2012

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

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

DATE: 20/08/2012

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO ★236

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 21 AUGUST 2012  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 26)

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

- (1) Whether progress is being made in the implementation of solutions to deal with acid mine drainage on the Witwatersrand; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether there has been any escalation in the projected costs of implementing the solutions to deal with acid mine drainage on the Witwatersrand; if not, how was this conclusion reached; if so, what are the relevant details? NO2740E

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**REPLY:**

- (1) Yes, acid mine drainage decant in the Western Basin is presently being mitigated by an immediate solution which involved the upgrade of an existing mine water neutralisation plant. The treatment process involves neutralisation to make the pH of the water acceptable to the receiving environment and also by removing heavy metals and some salt (sulphate). Since the commissioning of the upgraded plant, surface decant is almost eradicated and it is likely that the plant will fully address decant during the dry season.

Short-term solutions, also involving neutralisation plants, are proposed for the Eastern, Central and Western Basin mining areas of the Witwatersrand. The short-term solution will maintain underground mine water at acceptable levels within the Eastern and Central Basins. In the Western Basin, the plan is to operate the immediate and short-term solution simultaneously until the sub-surface mine water drops to an acceptable level.

The Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority, acting as the implementing agent for the Department is ready to award tenders for the construction of a neutralisation plant in each basin, subject to funding being made available. It is envisaged that funding will come from budget reprioritisation and or savings declared within the Department.

- (2) Yes, there was an escalation in the projected costs for the implementation of the short-term solution. Since the appointment of the Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority to implement emergency acid mine drainage mitigation measures, preliminary findings guided by a due diligence estimated the capital cost for the short-term solution in all three basins at R924 million as at July 2011.

Subsequent to the evaluation of bids and a comprehensive costing exercise, the actual cost was determined at R2, 202 billion as at June 2012.

The increase in costs is due to *inter alia*, currency fluctuations, engineering design changes due to unforeseen technical challenges, increase in the contingency provisions and inclusion of operating and treatments costs.

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