



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



EdST

Enquiries: H Smit
Telephone: 012 392 1301
Reference: 6/2/2/6

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 2872 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 25/10/2012

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE: 2012/10/30

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2872

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 19 OCTOBER 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 34)

2872. Mrs M Wenger (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) Whether she has been informed that mining sludge from the Welverdiend canal has spilled onto, among other places, municipal land adjacent to 1st Avenue in Welverdiend and that the canal is blocked; if so, what was the response of her department to the situation; if not,
- (2) whether she intends to investigate the situation; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether the Department of Water has taken any action in terms of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, against any entity responsible for the spill; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether the Department of Water is taking any steps to ensure that such a spill does not happen again; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW3546E

---0000---

REPLY:

- (1) The Department of Water Affairs (the Department) was informed of a spillage of sludge at the mine in Carletonville. The sludge flowed into a canal causing a partial blockage and also flowed onto municipal land in the Welverdiend area. Since the spillage posed a potential pollution risk to the water resource, the Department collected samples for analysis and engaged the mine on remedying the situation.
- (2) Yes, at the time of the spillage, the mine duly notified the Department and immediately commenced with measures to contain the spillage and initiate clean-up operations. The Department conducted inspections during July and August 2012 to establish the magnitude of the problem and thereafter continued to monitor the remedial interventions implemented by the mine. An inspection undertaken on 2 October 2012 confirmed that there was substantial progress in remediating the spillage.
- (3) Notwithstanding remedial interventions implemented by the mine at the time, on 28 August 2012, the Department issued the mine with a notice in terms of Section 20 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998), to clear the spillage and remediate the affected site.
- (4) The notice referred to in response (3) above additionally required the mine to implement measures to prevent a recurrence of the spillage. The mine subsequently constructed spillage containment facilities and is currently in the process of increasing pump infrastructure that will avert spillages in the event of mechanical failure.

---0000---