



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 381 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

M. Sibaya

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 06/03/2012

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DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

B. E. Molewa

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

DATE: See Minister's note:

dd: 11.03.2012.

*Approved, as amended.
11.03.2012
Done: S.*

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 381

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 24 FEBRUARY 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 04)

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

- (1) Whether there have recently been any occurrences of mine water entering the drinking water of Carolina town in Mpumalanga; if not, how was this conclusion reached; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether her department has investigated the quality of drinking water in the town; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether her department is providing the local municipality with any assistance to improve the quality of drinking water in Carolina; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether any (a)(i) notices and (ii) directives have been issued to, or (b) criminal charges have been laid against, any party for polluting the drinking water in Carolina; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) There has been no occurrence of acid mine drainage directly entering the drinking water reticulation system of Carolina. However, the Boesmanspruit dam has been impacted upon by alleged acid mine drainage contribution based on the preliminary results of the catchment investigation. Boesmanspruit dam is the abstraction point that feeds the Carolina Water Treatment Works (WTW). The reticulated water of Carolina goes through Carolina WTW before entering the drinking water reticulation system. The quality of the water in Boesmanspruit dam posed a challenge for the conventional treatment process at the Carolina WTW Works and thus difficulties were experienced in the treatment of this raw water to acceptable standards. However, at this stage the treatment process is undergoing modification and optimization to be able to produce water of acceptable standards.
- (2) The Department availed specialists to assess the situation and provide assistance to the municipal Process Controllers with the optimisation of water treatment. The investigation revealed that due to a drastic decline in pH levels of the raw water, the acidity of water increased thus creating a conducive environment for increased levels of heavy metals i.e. Aluminium, Iron and Manganese. Subsequently, corrective measures have been implemented (i.e. dosing of the water with lime to stabilise the pH level) in order to improve/optimize the water treatment.
- (3) As indicated in (2) above, the Department availed specialists to assist with improving the drinking water quality in Carolina. Such assistance included detailed monitoring (which remains ongoing) of the microbiological and chemical quality of the water. The corrective measures which have been implemented by the specialists in conjunction with the Municipality's Process Controllers have yielded positive outcomes, i.e. at present, the pH of the water has stabilised and all heavy metals are within the acceptable limits of the South African National Standards (SANS 241).

- (4) Pre-directives were given to four mines on 9 March 2012 and the relevant procedures are being followed to get compliance in terms of section 19 of the National Water Act, 1998 (Act No. 36 of 1998). No criminal charges have been laid against any party (since January 2012) for the pollution challenges being experienced in the Carolina area. However, the Department together with the Department of Mineral Resources are busy conducting investigations in the area.

The Department of Mineral Resources has also been requested to support the DWA with any information relating to the defunct mining operations in the area. The investigations are continuing.

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