



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MINISTRY OF WATER AND
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 612 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

M. Molewa

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 14/03/2012

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED ✓

B. E. Molewa

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

DATE: 2012/03/16

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 612

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09 MARCH 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 07)

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

- (1) Whether she has found that there is sufficient dilution capacity to ameliorate the (a) untreated acid mine drainage and (b) neutralised acid mine drainage decanting from basins in the Witwatersrand between now and the end of 2014; if so, how was this conclusion reached; if not, what are the relevant details;
- (2) what steps does she intend to take to rectify the situation? NW778E

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REPLY:

- (1)(a) Yes, in the Western Basin region of the Witwatersrand, untreated acid mine drainage (AMD) flowing north into the Crocodile catchment is diluted by partially-treated mine water and other water sources such as springs and tributaries of the Crocodile River. After the dilution from these sources, water quality monitoring in the Crocodile catchment shows significant improvement on the water resources.
- (1)(b) Yes, the short-term plan for treating the AMD in the Witwatersrand takes into account the impact of residual sulphate in the treated mine water. In order to ensure the sulphate level in the water is maintained at a standard fit for downstream users, dilution releases from the Vaal River System (VRS) will be required. Current VRS water quality and quantity modelling shows that demand on the VRS permit the release of fresh water to maintain water at standards fit for downstream users. However, as part of the Vaal Reconciliation Strategy, all salt loading (including the discharge of the neutralised AMD) on the VRS must be removed by 2014.
- (2) It is accepted that the discharge of the neutralised AMD containing high residual sulphate levels into the VRS is not sustainable. For this reason, the short-term treatment of the AMD will only operate as an emergency intervention to treat the current decant of the AMD in the Western Basin, and prevent decant in the Eastern and Central areas. The long-term study for the mine water management in the Witwatersrand is underway and this study will take into account all factors for the development of a solution towards the sustainable management of the AMD.

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