



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

EdTM

Enquiries: Ms DG Mochotlhi
Telephone: 012 336 7255
Reference: 2/1/5/1

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION ★294 FOR ORAL REPLY

A draft reply to the above mentioned question asked by Ms B D Ferguson (Cope) is attached for your consideration.

DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE:

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DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED


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

DATE: 2013/09/09



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MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION ★294 FOR ORAL REPLY

A draft reply to the above mentioned question asked by Ms B D Ferguson (Cope) is attached for your consideration.


DIRECTOR-GENERAL (Acting)

DATE: 20/10/15

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR ORAL REPLY

QUESTION NO 294

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 03 SEPTEMBER 2013
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 29)

★294. Ms B D Ferguson (Cope) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

Whether, with reference to the Government's decision to go ahead with fracking in the Karoo, she or her department has taken into consideration (a) the environmental impact of aquifers being contaminated, (b) the strain that will be put on water supplies since fracking requires huge amounts of water and (c) health problems in the long term as a result of extraction-related chemicals seeping into groundwater sources; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (a) Currently government's go ahead is for exploration only. Yes my Department has taken into consideration the possible environmental impacts on aquifers. Government's focus is broadened to include all unconventional gas and oil exploration and production throughout the country.

To this end, Government has published Notice 863 inviting public comments on the declaration of the exploration or production of onshore unconventional oil or gas resources and any activities including but not limited to hydraulic fracturing as a controlled activity.

The Inter-department Mineral Resources Monitoring Committee is currently working on integrated technical regulations under the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act in order to address concerns, including but not limited to:

- Baseline monitoring and aquifer monitoring programme;
- Water resource protection by determining no-go areas, identifying domestic aquifer supplies etc;
- Management of fracking fluid including disclosure of composition;
- Water use including alternative sources i.e. seawater and reuse; and
- Adoption of International construction standards for boreholes and gas wells.

- (b) The implication of a declaration as a controlled activity in terms of section 38 of the National Water Act, 1998 would be that the activity so declared becomes a water use requiring an authorisation and the entire lifecycles of activities will be assessed for possible impacts on water resources. Consideration will also be given to use of alternative sources of water e.g. reuse and desalination of seawater.

- (c) Yes, groundwater and surface water will be protected from potential contamination, thereby preventing health impacts. This will be addressed through the provision of the National Water Act and the proposed regulations which may include determination of no-go areas and the specifications on well design and construction.

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