



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 1284

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 1 APRIL 2022
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13)

1284. Ms A M M Weber (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

- (1) Whether, given the shocking destruction of the river ecology at the Wilge and Olifants Rivers in eMalahleni, Mpumalanga, (details furnished), and the visit by his department at the Kromdraai Mine on Monday 14 March 2022, he has found any indication of malpractice in the incident; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details.
- (2) whether his department was informed of the leak when they visited the venue on 14 March 2022; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what steps did they take to stop the disaster from happening;
- (3) in view of his department's verbal directive that the excess water must be pumped into another area so that the pressure will be less of a danger to break, what (a) follow-up steps did his department take to check whether the water was distributed somewhere else and (b) has he found to be the reason for the build-up of the acid drain mine water at the specified mine?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

- (1) The initial investigation determined that a concrete seal at the shaft failed as a result of a build-up of water inside the shaft. The water use licence for Kwezela Colliery's Kromdraai site has a condition that requires groundwater monitoring through boreholes, but this was apparently not done. Proper groundwater monitoring would have given an indication of rising water levels in the shaft.
- (2) On 14 February 2022 the Mine indicated that it became aware of an uncontrolled release of mine-impacted water at Khwezela Colliery outside of eMalahleni, in the Mpumalanga Province. The Department of Water and Sanitation conducted a site investigation on 17 March 2022. The incident took place at the South Shaft which according to the mine was last operational in 1966.
- (3) The Department issued a verbal directive after the site investigation on 17 February 2022, and again issued a written directive confirming the verbal directive on 21 February 2022.


The Department conducted a follow up inspection on 03 March 2022 and observed that the water was still flowing from the collapsed shaft, however it was trapped on a designed pit a few meters from the shaft to prevent further pollution of the water resource. The water was being pumped into a void called Ramp 8 for storage. The plan according to the mine is to pump the water from Ramp 8 into a pollution control dam called Lopies Dam. From Lopies dam the water will flow into the Lime Treatment Plant for further treatment before it is discharged into Kromdraaispruit.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED~~/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 11/04/22

✓
DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 29/04/2022