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Sent: 04 December 2012 07:26 PM
To: 'frikkie botha'; 'Helen Duigan'; 'Kristin Kallesen';
Kristen.vanschie@inl.co.za; 'Daniella Ann Potter'; 'Ian Barkhuizen';
'Paula Combrink'
Subject: FW: Stuur asb reaksie, Paul!

Importance: High

FYI

Paul Fairall

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Wetlands in Crisis-Gauteng Wetland Forum



water affairs

Department:
Water Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

EdST

1409
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Reference:

MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: QUESTION 3145 FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE:

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

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

DATE:

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 3145

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 09 NOVEMBER 2012
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 39)

3145. Mrs M Wenger (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs:

- (1) What is the current state of performance of the Northern Works wastewater plant in Johannesburg;
- (2) whether she has been informed of pollution incidents emanating from the Northern Works wastewater plant since 1 October 2012; if so, what are the relevant details; if not,
- (3) whether she intends to investigate the matter; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (4) whether any notices, directives or criminal charges have been issued against the municipality for pollution incidents emanating from the Northern Works in recent weeks; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (5) whether she intends to visit the Northern Works to assess the performance of the plant; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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REPLY:

- (1) The Johannesburg Northern Works Wastewater Treatment Plant is currently having a limited treatment capacity due to high solids (sludge) build up in the system caused by the current upgrades of the dewatering systems (belt presses) and these resulted in wastewater containing sludge spilling into the Jukskei River from the balancing dam. Storm water infiltration into the treatment systems has worsened the situation.

The plant is designed to treat 450 ML effluent per day and during this wet season, the plant is receiving in excess of 600ML/day which makes treatment of all effluent received impossible and some excess was stored in the balancing dams.

- (2) Yes, the Department learned about the incident through a complaint by the member of public on 24 October 2012 and was later informed by the City of Johannesburg on 5 November 2012.

- (3) The matter was investigated on 30 October 2012 and 2 November 2012 and the following findings were made:
- Excess sludge was overflowing into a pollution control dam (balancing dam);
 - The pollution control dams were silted up;
 - Due to high flows, the dams could not accommodate all the overflows and they eventually spilled into the Juskei River;
 - The discharged effluent was very bad to such an extent that the river water at the spillage sites turned black;
 - Sludge dewatering equipments (belt presses); and
 - Engineers were busy installing four new belt presses.
- (4) No notices, directives or criminal charges have been issued. The matter has been discussed at the meetings which resulted in the implementation of a detailed action plan to address the problem.
- (5) I do not intend to visit the plant as I was provided with a full report and will continuously be kept updated on the implementation of the plan of action.

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