**Dr. WJ Boshoff**

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**Vote 34: Mineral Resources and Energy**

Honourable House Chair

South Afric is regressing as a mining destination. We are currently number 57 out of 62. The main reasons given, are land claims, labour relations, organised crime and weak public services as embodied by Eskom and Transnet.

In terms of the transformative agenda, land claims, labour laws and BEE-requirements for ownership is understandable as an idealistic policy to undo what has happened in the past. Whether it will work, whether it is pragmatically speaking a good policy, is another question. But what about organised crime and weak government services? That is the result of government failure.

If mining decreases, pressure mount to export unbeneficiated ore, in a need for foreign currency.

Turning to energy, the honourable minister tries to drive a wedge between environmental considerations and developmental ones. One participant even referred to gas as a renewable energy source. In fact, all oil, coal and gas are fossilised hydrocarbons – unless it is hydrogen gas, which can be produced. It is undisputed that earth was very unfavourable for human habitation eons ago, due to the high level of carbon in the athmosphere.

That carbon was fixed by biological processes, which rendered earth habitable. It is exactly that carbon which is released back into the athmosphere when burning fossil fuels – whether it be oil, coal or natural gas. These fuels, therefore, have to go, earlier or later.

The question is what should replace it. It is difficult to make such a decision with so many emerging technologies around.

Nuclear is important. It does in fact not emit any climate-relevant gases and safety problems are more or less sorted out. What is not sorted out yet, is cost.

Solar has the biggest transformative potential, as solar radiation occurs evenly – well not exactly evenly, but more so than coal or crude oil – over the whole globe. The equipment to harvest it, because energy cannot be produced, can be owned, and is in fact been owned, by many more people than any other energy source.

Hydrogen gas is of course also important, as it is in sync with solar. It is even in sync with our mining strategy, as the platinum group of metals is important in the process of producing hydrogen gas.

What we need to know, is whether this department is working in the correct direction. Certainly it does not seem so.

I thank you.