



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: O2/1/5/2

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1126 {NW1378E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12 of 2022

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 25 March 2022

Ms A M M Weber (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether she will furnish Ms A M M Weber with the rehabilitation and/or restoration plan for the Wilge and Olifants Rivers in eMalahleni where the river ecology has been destroyed and 23 indigenous fish species have died during the ordeal; if not, why not; if so, on what date;
- (2) what is the (a) actual distance of destruction of the ecology and (b) distance of the ecological damage from Kromdraai and Saalboomplaas which are the points where the incident commences to the two rivers;
- (3) what is the timeline for the reintroduction and restoration of the algae to the specified rivers as the algae is one of the most precious elements in biodiversity in the rivers that the fish lived on for their survival;
- (4) what other effects, besides the 23 fish species that died, has she found did the incident have on the rest of the biodiversity of the rivers such as plants, trees and animals?

1126. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- (1) The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) will not be able to provide information relating to the rehabilitation and/or restoration plan as it is not in possession of any

such plan. The information regarding the rehabilitation and/or restoration is contained in the Risk Assessment Framework and Rehabilitation Plan of the Wilge River and Olifants River Catchment, which was submitted to Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) by the company responsible for the incident.

- (2)
 - (a) The information regarding the actual distance of the destruction of the ecology was submitted to the DWS by the company responsible for the incident.
 - (b) The distance of the ecological damage from Kromdraai and Saalboomplaat was provided to the DWS.
- (3) The information regarding the timeline for the reintroduction and restoration of the algae to the specified rivers may be provided by the DWS. The information was submitted to the DWS following instructions issued to the company contained in the directive dated 21 February 2022.
- (4) The DFFE is unable to provide information regarding other effects observed because of the incident. Such information may be provided by the DWS, who are in possession of the Risk Assessment Framework and Rehabilitation Plan of the Wilge River and Olifants River Catchment, which was submitted by the company responsible for the incident. The document mentioned above was submitted to the DWS by the company in compliance with the conditions of the directive issued by the DWS on 21 February 2022.

Officials from the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) have been communicating with the relevant officials from the DMRE and the DWS, as well as officials from the Mpumalanga Tourism and Parks Agency, who have been leading the response to the incident, to see how the DFFE can assist in relation to water sampling activities.

Regards



MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

DATE: 6/4/2022