

**Ref:02/1/5/2**

**MINISTER**

**QUESTION NO. 2318 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

A draft reply to **Ms J Steenkamp (DA)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA**

**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE:**

**DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED**

**MRS B E E MOLEWA, MP**

**MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**DATE:**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**(For written reply)**

**QUESTION NO. 2318 {NW2680E}**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 21 of 2015**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION: 12 June 2015**

 **Ms J Steenkamp (DA) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:**

(1) Has her department undertaken any (a) research and/or (b) investigation into (i) the environmental impact of plastic shopping bags and/or (ii) potentially banning the use of plastic shopping bags; if not, why not; if so, what were the findings of such (aa) research and/or (bb) investigation;

(2) Does her department have a policy position with regard to the banning of plastic shopping bags; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW2680E

**2318. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:**

(1)

(a)(i) Research on environmental impacts of plastic shopping bags:

The department undertook a study to determine the impact of the Plastic Regulations in 2007. The impact of plastics on the environment is well documented through various institutions and as such the department does not have to undertake additional research but will rather use the already existing information.

(a)(ii) Research on potentially banning shopping bags:

The department is currently undertaking a study to determine possible management options for plastic waste in the country as part of the finalisation of the plastics and packaging industry waste management plan which will include alternative ways of managing plastics bags. With new and emerging technologies there are other innovative ways of managing plastic with the potential to create jobs. Only when all other options have been explored would we then consider the option of banning plastic bags.

(b)(i) Investigation into environmental impacts of shopping bags:

 See (a)(i) above

(b)(ii) Investigation into potentially banning the use of plastic bags:

 See (a)(ii) above.

(2) The department may consider banning plastics bags as an option within the comprehensive assessment of the management of plastic waste in South Africa. It will include this option in the finalisation of the Industry Waste Management Plan (IndWMP) for Plastics, Paper and Packaging. This IndWMP will facilitate and promote the recycling sector for this waste stream including plastic bags which will also determine the most appropriate management option for this waste stream.

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