



**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. 354 {NW367E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 2 of 2022

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 18 February 2022

Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether, in view of the Chinese bulk cargo vessel NS Qingdao that recently dumped 1 300 tons of unstable chemical cargo off the West Coast of the Republic after permission was granted by her department and the SA Marine Safety Authority and SAMSA, and noting that the vessel originally caught alight in November 2021, any consideration was given at the time of towing the vessels out of South African waters in order to avoid toxic dumping in our waters; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether the impact of the Benguela Current was taken into consideration when permission was granted for the dumping; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) what are the coordinates of the area where the waste was dumped;
- (4) whether her department will be monitoring the toxicity levels around the dump site; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

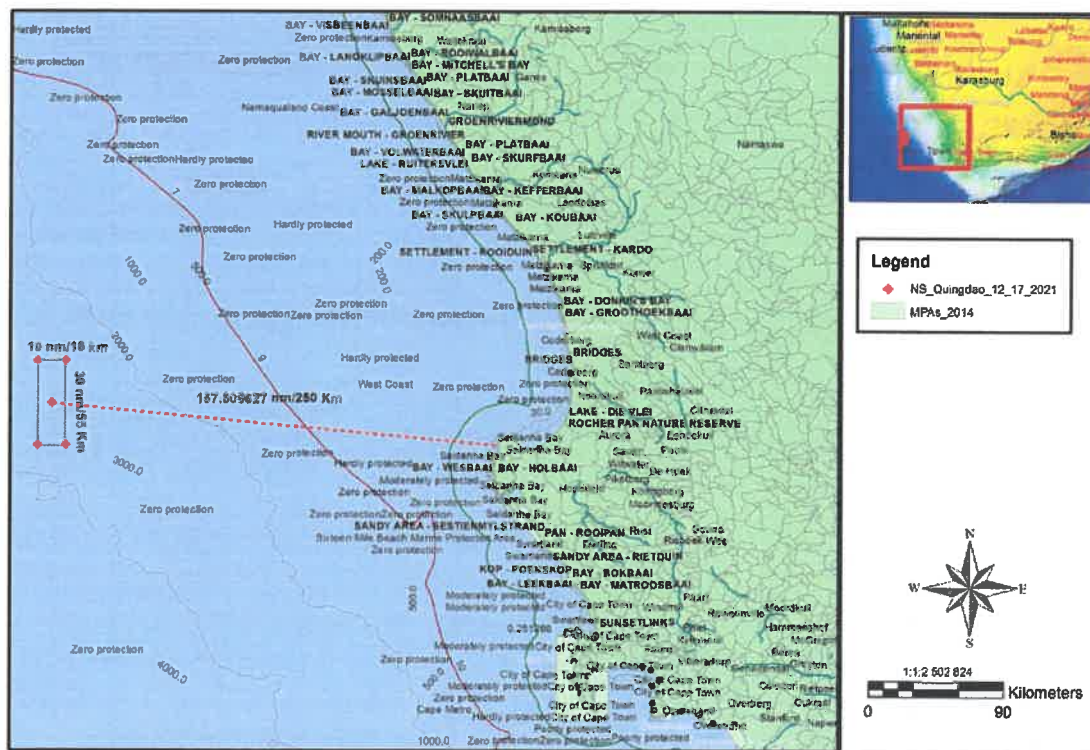
354. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- 1) The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) is mandated, under national legislation, to ensure the safety of life and property at sea. In line with this mandate, SAMSA directed the vessel to sail to a protected anchorage in St. Helena Bay where the vessel could be afforded a place of refuge, whilst the crew and salvors attempted to manage the reactive cargo. St. Helena Bay was

selected for several reasons, largely due to its anchorage being remote, its mostly offshore winds, low swell conditions and limited rainfall.

Efforts were made to safely remove the reactive cargo using the ship cranes, grabs skips and a dedicated vessel to transfer the cargo to the shore for land-based disposal. Although some of the cargo (just over 100 tons) was removed, the remaining cargo became increasingly unstable due to fires flaring up in the holding area. The amount of cargo remaining onboard exceeded the ability to discharge by skip as earlier planned, and an application was submitted to the Department of Forestry, Fisheries, and the Environment (DFPE) for emergency dumping, owing to the fact that the situation had posed an unacceptable threat to human health, safety and the coastal environment.

- 2) Prior to the disposal, the oceanographic conditions of the disposal area were analysed. Scientists were consulted to consider the current and wind characteristics and circulation patterns around the dumpsite in order to predict how the material may be transported.
- 3) The dumpsite is located at co-ordinates 32° 30' S; 015° 15' E. The image below depicts the general spatial location and extent of the site:



- 4) The Department will not conduct toxicity testing in the area immediately around the dumpsite given the dynamic nature of the offshore ocean environment. The ship owner has appointed an oceanographic modeller to first model the surrounding areas, considering the influence of ocean currents, in order to identify target areas that will form part of a monitoring programme. In addition, the following monitoring will be conducted:
- The disposal site will be monitored via satellite imagery by the department for any changes in surface water nutrients and chlorophyll. The area had been continually monitored during the disposal activity, and after, for nutrient and chlorophyll changes.
 - Water quality will be assessed for Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) by specialists appointed by the ship owner to determine any adverse impacts to the organisms in the water column.
 - Mussels will be collected along the shoreline of St. Helena Bay by the specialists. The mussels will be assessed in terms of toxicity and bioaccumulation of any traces of the chemicals disposed of at sea.
 - Toxicology testing on any major animal washups will be conducted to assess the nature of the mortality.

Regards



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

DATE: 25/02/2022