



**forestry, fisheries
& the environment**

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

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 355 {NW368E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 2 of 2022

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

- (1) In view of the recent devastating fires at the Kleinmond plantation, what impact has she found has the ongoing land invasions at her department's plantation in Grabouw had on the current and future functioning of the plantation;
- (2) whether her department has undertaken a fire safety assessment to evaluate the risk of wildfires emanating from the settlements on the plantation; if not, why not; if so, what were the outcomes of the assessments;
- (3) whether the site is being regularly maintained by her department to manage the build-up of flammable natural materials; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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

- 1) The current land invasion has a negative impact on plantations as a result of the illegal harvesting of pine trees that the illegal occupants use to build houses. The future of the plantation will be determined by the successful evictions of illegal land occupants. Through the Sheriff of the Court, the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is also executing the preservation order by removing newly built structures in the area.

The fire at Kleinmond was caused by woodcutters, not land invaders in Grabouw.

- 2) Yes, through its Forestry Support programme, the DFFE conducted a fire safety assessment, which demonstrated that illegal occupation could result in litigations to the DFFE as a result of fires starting from State forest land to neighbouring fruit farms. To prevent the spread of fire, the DFFE through its Forestry Support programme made firebreaks on the eastern side of the areas affected by land invasions. Firebreaks of up to 50 m prevents fires from the occupied land from spreading to adjacent farms.
- 3) The site is regularly maintained through the Forestry Support programme driven by the DFFE to carry out integrated fire management using labour-intensive Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) workers. The programme has 55 workers divided into two teams of 30 and 25. Approximately 22 workers have been deployed from now until April 2022 to be on standby and ready to combat fires as they occur. The main responsibilities of these teams are to reduce fuel loads and to prepare firebreaks.

Regards



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

DATE: 25/02/2022