



**environment, forestry
& fisheries**

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: O2/1/5/2

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1276 {NW1644E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 22 of 2020

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Mr A C Roos (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:


In light of the fact that the Department is responsible for implementing control activities and operations on the Roodeplaat dam according to the 2014 Strategic Plan for the Integrated Control of Aquatic Weeds in Roodeplaat Dam, what (a) control activities have been undertaken by the Department since the directive to local stakeholders to stop spraying, on 7 February 2020, (b) urgent actions will be taken to deal with the complete coverage of the rowing course by water hyacinth, and (c) process will be undertaken to ensure that reasonable expenses incurred by the community are reimbursed given that the community surrounding the Roodeplaat Dam needed to step in and fund water hyacinth control activities from December 2018 to February 2020 to prevent an environmental crisis?

1276. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

The control of Roodeplaat Dam is covered under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Environment, forestry and Fisheries (DEFF), and the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (DHSW&S). DHSW&S appointed DEFF as the implementing agent to control all Invasive Alien Species (AIS) on the dam, including Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) which is the major aquatic weed present on the Roodeplaat Dam.

- a. The 2014 Strategic Plan for the Integrated Control of Aquatics Weeds in Roodeplaat Dam is currently under review due to the National Water Act amendments regarding the application of Section 21 (l) and Section 21 (c) permit applications. This requires that any activities that are implemented on the dam needs to be approved by the DHSW&S. The directive to stop all spraying on Roodeplaat dam was given by the DHSW&S at a stakeholder's meeting held on the 7th of February 2020.
- b. DEFF has been working on the permits needed to commence activities on the dam for the manual removal, biological control and potential harvesting of biomass. The Department submitted a proposal for a Section 21 (c) permit for the algal control programme that occurred in March 2020, prior the SA Rowing championships event. This was approved, and assisted the rowing event to go ahead due to the removal of the cyanobacterial blooms on the dam. The COVID-19 lockdown temporarily stopped all implementation activities such as the manual removal of the Water Hyacinth biomass from the dam and the release of biocontrol agents.
- c. DEFF is currently in the process of directly appointing contractors to manually remove the Water Hyacinth biomass on the dam, but first needs to ensure that health and safety compliance measures are in place. Furthermore, COVID-19 risk assessment training must be done with the contractors before allowing them to start work again. The stakeholders around the dam agreed to assist in the control of the Water Hyacinth, in the Stakeholder's meeting held on 7 February 2020. DHSW&S informed stakeholders of their responsibilities on the dam, relating to the National Water Act. It was indicated that the stakeholders' assistance in this regard is a responsibility under the National Water Act and, as such, they will not be compensated.

Regards


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MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT
DATE:..... 7/3/2020