



**environment, forestry
& fisheries**

Department:
Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 166 {NW162E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 12 of 2020

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Mr A Arnolds (Western Cape: EFF) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Why some of the largest polluters in the country are still exempted from regulations (details furnished); and
- (2) whether her Department has any plans that are targeted at reducing air pollution to ensure (a) safe air quality and (b) the attainment of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals; if not, why not; if so, (i) what plans and (ii) what are the further relevant details?

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

1. The Department has not issued any big polluters with an exemption to comply with Air Quality Minimum Emission Standards.
2. (a) The reduction of air pollution in the country is a shared responsibility among the three spheres of government. Primarily, the role of the national government, as led by the National Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, is to provide strategic policy direction in the prevention of air pollution in the country, while provincial government provides such

leadership function at a provincial level by expanding the national approach to address air quality issues specific to provinces. Municipal authorities primarily influence air quality governance through the introduction of by-laws, which are legally enforceable within the municipal authority's jurisdiction.

(b) There is no specific Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) dedicated to air quality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. There are, however, notable specific targets which would relate to efforts to combat air pollution, such as:

- SDG target 3.9 on the reduction of the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination;
- SDG target 7.2 on access to clean energy in the home;
- SDG target 11.6 on air quality in cities;
- SDG target 11.2 on access to sustainable transport; and
- SDG 13 (climate action) as well as the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change.

All these are taken into account in the Department's plans and programmes mentioned in 1 above.

(i) and (ii) In achieving this objective, a number of measures have been developed, which include, amongst others:

- Declaration and management of priority areas

The Minister identified three air pollution 'hot spots' (priority areas) in the country for focused attention, on the basis that that National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) are being exceeded in these areas. These are the Highveld, Vaal Triangle Air-Shed and Waterberg-Bojanala Priority Areas. As part of this declaration, air quality management plans have been developed and are being implemented to bring these areas into compliance with national ambient air quality standards.

- Development and setting of ambient air quality standards

Since the promulgation of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004) and the subsequent development of the National Air Quality Framework, the government has developed the National Ambient Air

Quality Standards (NAAQS) and initiated ambient air quality monitoring programmes. This was done in order to provide information fundamental to decision-making; identifying air pollution non-compliance with the NAAQS; and defining intervention strategies to evaluate the efficacy of air quality management strategies. Ambient air quality monitoring is also being used to identify areas in need of restoration and their prioritisation, such as in the national air quality priority areas.


- Licensing of activities through Atmospheric Emission Licenses.

In an effort to regulate, control and manage emissions from industrial activities, the Minister has identified and published a list of activities which result in atmospheric emissions that require an atmospheric emission license before they can operate. In addition, the list also contains minimum emission standards in respect of pollutants resulting from these activities. No person may undertake a listed activity without an atmospheric emission license. The Minister has also detailed the consequences of the unlawful conduct of a listed activity resulting in atmospheric emissions.

- Air Quality Management Plans and Strategies

The Air Quality Management Plans are targeted air pollution reduction strategies that are developed by all provincial and local governments. The plans identify sources of air pollution within a particular jurisdiction and suggest strategies to address it. The Department also developed a strategy to address air pollution in dense low-income settlements. The plan was approved by Cabinet in 2018 and is at its initial stage of implementation. There are other strategies which are still under development such as Dust Management Strategy. The Dust Management Strategy seeks to reduce pollution caused by dust from sources such as mines, transport and stockpiles across the country.

Regards


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MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT
DATE:.....12/6/2020