



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 271 FOR ORAL REPLY: NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

A draft reply to **Mr M Khawula (KwaZulu-Natal: IFP)** to the above-mentioned question is enclosed for your consideration.

**MS NOSIPHO NGCABA
DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

DATE:

DRAFT REPLY APPROVED/AMENDED

**DR B E E MOLEWA, MP
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

DATE:

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For oral reply)

QUESTION NO. 271 {CO392E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 29 of 2017

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 10 October 2017

Mr M Khawula (KwaZulu-Natal: IFP) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

What action is her Department taking with regard to the high level of air pollution, in the Mpumalanga Highveld, which still remain heavily polluted 10 years after it was declared a priority area in terms of the National Environmental Management: Air Quality Act, 2004 (Act No. 39 of 2004)?

271. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

Ambient air quality data collected by the Department's network in the priority area indicates that there have been notable improvements in PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ levels in monitoring sites such as Ermelo, Hendrina and Middelburg. Sulphur dioxide (SO₂) concentrations have also shown improvements across all the five monitoring stations in the priority area. The Department acknowledges that these improvements have not resulted in the air quality in the priority area being in compliance with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The reality is that the desired improvements will not happen over a short period of time. Experience from countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States of America also indicates that the path to reaching desired air quality level takes time.

The Department, together with its stakeholders, continues to implement the priority area's Air Quality Management Plan. Implementation task teams, consisting of government departments, community based organisations, and industries are driving the implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan. In addition, the Department conducts regular joint strategic compliance inspections together with other spheres of government and relevant affected departments. In the current financial year, the Department has conducted a number of air quality targeted investigations aimed at ensuring that companies in the priority area comply with air quality legislation. Where non-compliance is detected, the Department follows an administrative enforcement process (through the issuing of compliance notices or directives) to bring companies back into compliance and/or a criminal investigation process (in the event of serious contraventions resulting from intentional criminal actions).

It is important to note that in addition to industrial processes, there are other air pollution sources that contribute to air pollution, such as motor vehicles and burning of coal for domestic purposes, which also impacts on human health and wellbeing. For this reason, and even though the regulation of air pollution falls within the mandate of local authorities, the Department is taking a holistic and integrated approach in dealing with air pollution, and is finalising the strategy to address air pollution in dense low income settlements. The strategy seeks to coordinate initiatives aimed at addressing air pollution in this sector.

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