



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref:02/1/5/2

MINISTER

QUESTION NO. 3378 FOR WRITTEN REPLY: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

A draft reply to **Mr G Mackay (DA)** 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 ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 3378 {NW3771E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO.39 of 2017

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 27 October 2017

Mr G Mackay (DA) to ask the Minister of Environmental Affairs:

(a) On which date did Eskom approach her department to conduct environmental impact assessments for Duynfontein as the preferred site to establish another nuclear power station as part of the Government's

new nuclear build programme, (b) what are the details of the grounds on which her department approved the specified site as the preferred site for a new nuclear power station and (c) why did her department approve the specified site as the preferred site for a new nuclear power station when the Government's new nuclear build programme determinations and intergovernmental agreements relating to the programme have been declared unconstitutional and invalid by a court of law?

NW3771E

3378. THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS REPLIES:

RESPONSE:

Eskom lodged an application for environmental authorisation on 1 May 2007, for the proposed construction and operation of a Nuclear Power Station in South Africa. The independent consultant appointed by Eskom as an Environmental Assessment Practitioner (EAP) identified five sites as alternatives for the proposed development during the Scoping Phase of the Environmental Impact Assessment, namely Brazil and Schulpfontein (Northern Cape); Duynefontein (Western Cape); Bantamsklip (Western Cape) and Thyspunt (Eastern Cape). The Brazil and Schulpfontein sites were considered unsuitable for the proposed development and were eliminated from further assessment during the Scoping Phase. Bantamsklip was eliminated from further consideration in the Environmental Impact Assessment stage as there were shortcomings relating to transportation risks, urban planning and the level of detail provided in the assessment report on the transmission of power from the operational station was found to be inadequate when compared to the other two sites. The Thyspunt and Duynefontein sites were the only two sites that progressed to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) phase and were presented as viable sites for the proposed development. The Duynefontein site was eventually approved by the Department from the two sites that were presented as viable options. There were numerous specialist assessments undertaken by experts in their respective fields which culminated in extremely voluminous specialist assessment reports. Some of these reports were subjected to a peer review during the EIA process. In addition however, these reports were also subjected to an independent review process by a panel of experts outside of the Department - before the department made a final decision.

The Duynefontein site was selected given that there were generally less overall environmental impacts associated with this site relative to impacts associated with the development of a "greenfields" site, i.e. Thyspunt. The refinement of the Duynefontein footprint to a terrestrial area of approximately 265ha, immediately north of the Koeberg Nuclear Power Station and inland from the coast has materially reduced the footprint-related environmental impacts of the project. In addition, the Duynefontein site is adjacent to the existing Koeberg Nuclear Power Station, thereby allowing for a suite of logistical and operational synergies.

The Western Cape High Court judgement found the request made by government for proposals to be submitted for the procurement of 9.6 gigawatts of nuclear to be unlawful and unconstitutional. The ruling had no bearing on the application for the Environmental Authorisation as it had nothing to do with procurement processes. The application for environmental authorisation was lodged in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, Act 108 of 1998 and the associated environmental impact assessment regulations. Therefore the selection of Duynefontein as a preferred site through the Environmental Impact Assessment process does not violate the High Court ruling, as it is an unrelated process.