



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 570 {NW760E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 11 of 2020

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Mr M N Paulsen (EFF) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

What support has her department given to small-scale fishers whose livelihoods were negatively impacted by earlier lockdown regulations?

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

The following support measures have been provided by the Department to the small-scale and interim-relief fishing sectors during the COVID-19 Lockdown period:

- i. The Department was instrumental in ensuring that the fishing sector was included as part of the essential services and this intervention enabled some fishing activities to continue, whilst adhering to the provisions of the Disaster Management Act and Regulations promulgated thereunder, by allowing:
 - a. Extension of the West Coast Rock Lobster (WCRL) Fishing Season – the dramatic drop in exports to China since the outbreak of the Coronavirus resulted in the WCRL sector enduring economic losses from the decline in exports. The small-scale fishers and the commercial

sector petitioned the Department to extend the WCRL nearshore fishery in the Western Cape until June 2020, and the Offshore and Northern Cape fisheries until September 2020.

- b. Exemptions in respect of the validity of Permits and Licences: – Holders of Permits and/or Authorisations that had been issued in terms of the Marine Living Resources Act, 1998 (Act No. 18 of 1998) and will expire, or have expired during this period, were granted an exemption in terms of the Act to continue to operate with their existing Permits and/or Authorisations for a period of ninety (90) days, that is, until the 23rd of June 2020. In particular, the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Small-scale Fishing Cooperatives that have just been allocated fishing rights and are only in possession of their Grant of Right Letters, were allowed to fish using those letters, while they are still in the process of applying for their Catch Permits. This dispensation was granted to minimise the risk of exposure within the fishing industry.
- ii. The issuing of Permits to Perform Essential Services – The Department has issued Annexure C, Form 1, Permits to Perform Essential Services, in terms of Regulation 11 B (3) to all Small-scale Fishing Cooperatives in the four (4) Coastal Provinces. This dispensation was granted in compliance with the Disaster Management Act and amended Regulations to allow the fishers to be able to catch Snoek throughout its migration as it the mainstay and a key economic contributor to the linefish sector.
 - iii. The Department also facilitated engagements with other relevant Government Departments as well as other fishing sectors in the fishing industry, for example:
 - a. Department of Tourism – this Department was engaged to identify accommodation establishments on the West Coast for the purpose of accommodating small-scale fishers travelling from distant areas to catch Snoek that is migrating along the North Coast.
 - b. South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) – was engaged to shorten the business process with regard to issuing of the necessary and required Certificate of Fitness for fishing vessels.
 - c. Fish Processing Establishments (FPE) – licenced FPEs were engaged and encouraged to buy fish directly from the small-scale and traditional linefishers when they land their catch during the Lockdown period.
 - d. Municipalities – relevant municipalities along the West Coast were engaged to speedily issue trading permits to fishers, *langanas* and *vlekkers*.

- e. Law Enforcement Agencies – have been engaged to assist the Department, both *en route* to, and within, the fishing harbours where there was increased activity as a result of the snoek run, to ensure that all rightholders comply with the Disaster Management Act and amended Regulations.
- f. Access to International Market – together with the Rock Lobster Industry Associations, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO), the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the DTIC), Defence and Public Enterprises were engaged to explore the possibility of exporting the available consignments of fish.



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

DATE: 30/4/2020