



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Ref: O2/1/5/2

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(For written reply)

QUESTION NO. 1310 {NW1571E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 13 of 2022

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 01 April 2022

Mr D W Bryant (DA) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

- (1) Whether, in view of the alleged high levels of vanadium in the dams surrounding Sasol West and the allegations that the Benfield West Chemical Sewer valves have not been functioning correctly, her department took any steps, on its own and/or in collaboration with the Department of Water and Sanitation, to ensure that the damaged Benfield West Chemical Sewer valves are replaced and/or repaired after this was reported to the SA Human Rights Commission; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether the API dams at Sasol West have been tested for vanadium recently; if not, why not; if so, (a) on what date and (b) what were the results;
- (3) whether she has taken any further steps to investigate and hold Sasol to account for leakage of vanadium; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

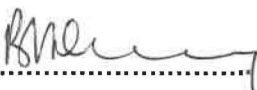
1310. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

- 1) The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) responded to the reports that were submitted to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) by carrying out a comprehensive inspection. During this inspection, it was found that the valves had already

been replaced by SASOL Secunda and were in working order. However, the reports relating to malfunctioning valves (as claimed by the individual before the SAHRC), which caused serious pollution, were verified which triggered a criminal investigation into these claims. (See the response to 3 below).

- 2) (a) Documentary evidence obtained during the criminal investigation relates to daily sampling events (up until December 2021) for vanadium, which were undertaken at the API dams at Sasol West. These documents form part of the evidence that is included in the criminal docket.
- (b) The evidence is part of the criminal docket in relation to which the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has not yet decided. Accordingly, it is not possible at this stage for the DFFE to share this information.
- 3) The DFFE carried out a comprehensive compliance verification inspection aimed at determining SASOL Secunda's compliance status in relation to various environmental authorisations after allegations of vanadium discharge into the Vaal River surfaced at the inquiry initiated by the SAHRC. After these claims were verified, a criminal investigation was initiated against SASOL Secunda under Secunda CAS 19/06/2021. This investigation was finalised and the docket is currently with the DPP. A decision by the DPP on whether to prosecute is currently awaited.

Regards



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

DATE: 11/4/2022