



**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. 1976 {NW2209E}

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 19 of 2021

DATE OF PUBLICATION: 27 August 2021

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

- (1) Whether she has been informed of the storage of dangerous chemicals close to an important Natural area (details furnished); if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) what are the full relevant details of the chemicals that were stored at the facility before it burnt down;
- (3) what number of complaints were received by her department from members of the public regarding the impact of the acrid fumes on their health?

1976. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

1. The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) was not aware of the storage of the chemicals in close proximity to the natural area prior to the fire incident that took place in July 2021.

The DFFE is not the competent authority for issuing environmental authorisations in respect of such an activity as this function lies with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs.

As a result of the fire incident, the DFFE received a notification in terms of section 30 of the National Environmental Management Act, 1998 (Act No. 107 of 1998) and has subsequently therefore become aware of the storage facility.

2. On the 25th of August 2021 the Minister in the National Assembly committed to release the findings of the investigation by a multi-departmental investigative team in relation to the compliance profile of United Phosphorus Limited (UPL) by the end of September 2021. The drafting of that report is at an advanced stage and the department remains on track to disclose this to the public as the Minister committed to do.
3. The DFFE received 12 (twelve) complaints from the public through the departments Environmental Crime and Incidents Hotline at the time when the fire was not fully extinguished. It should, however, be noted that the majority of the complaints were reported to the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality.

Regards



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

DATE: 10/9/2021