



Wes-Kaapse Provinsiale Parlement Western Cape Provincial Parliament IPalamente yePhondo leNtshona Koloni

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Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environmental Affairs and Development Planning on its oversight visit to the Brandvlei Dam Project on 7 May 2021, as follows:

Delegation

The delegation consisted of the following members:

Marran, P (ANC)

Van Der Westhuizen, AP (DA: Chairperson and leader of the delegation)

Apologies were received from members Baartman, DM (DA), Maseko, LM (DA) and Marais, PJ (FF Plus)

1. Introduction and background

Section 114 (2)(b)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa mandates provincial legislatures to provide for mechanisms to maintain oversight over the Provincial Executive Authority in the province.

During the deliberation on the Department of Agriculture's Annual Report for the 2019/20 financial year on 4 December 2020, the Committee was informed that the Department submitted a proposal for funding to the Department of Water Affairs (DWS) to raise the current Brandvlei Feeder Canal by 30cm and that this would allow an additional amount of water to be diverted during the winter months for storage which would bring a significant additional area under irrigation.

The Committee further determined that, due to an undertaking by the national Minister of Water and Sanitation, the DWS would undertake the construction work and that the R20 million budgeted by the Department of Agriculture for this project was surrendered to the Provincial Revenue Fund for COVID-19 related expenditure.

The Committee was concerned about the continued delays in respect of this beneficial project but was pleased that the Department of Agriculture indicated willingness to pursue this matter with the DWS.

To this end, the Committee resolved that it would request regular updates on this matter and further resolved to conduct an oversight visit to the Brandvlei Dam and related projects in the Breede River Valley area to observe progress made in terms of construction and to gain a better understanding of the potential benefits of the projects once completed.

In addition, the Committee met on 10 February 2021 to discuss improving the safety of transporting farm workers and resolved to visit a farm where good designs for structures were already in place that would give some form of protection and add to the dignity of passengers whilst being transported on the back of otherwise open vehicles.

2. Overview of the visit

The visit commenced with a briefing by the Department of Agriculture, officials from the Department of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation (DHSWS) as well as members from the Water Users Associations on the Brandvlei Project at the Breede Valley Municipality. The delegation then proceeded to the Papenkuil Pump Station, the Brandvlei Feeder Canal and the Holsloot Weir and concluded its day visit at a farm where good design structures were in place for transporting farm workers.

3. Findings

Increasing the capacity of the Brandvlei Dam feeder canal to allow more water to be diverted into the dam would result in the diversion of additional water needed to irrigate more agricultural land. It was anticipated that the additional irrigated land will generate primary jobs, secondary jobs and may draw in R2,2 billion worth of value chain investment by the private sector.

An upgrade to the Papenkuil pump station would allow an increase of the yield from the Brandvlei Dam. The upgrade would entail the replacement of pumps as the original motors at the pump station were almost 40 years old and from England which made it difficult to source replacement parts. The DHSWS has completed a feasibility study in this regard. Of concern to the Committee was the supply chain management process within the DHSWS which appeared to be tedious and therefore resulted in delays in the procurement of goods and services and also hampered emergency procurement, which then led to delays with repair work. This resulted in a loss of water that would have been stored and made available for irrigation.

Annual flooding of the Holsloot River caused large scale damages and affected the members of the Holsloot Water Users Association who were farming on large tracts of irrigated agricultural land. In collaboration with various stakeholders, the Department of Agriculture embarked on a facilitative process supporting the Holsloot Water Users Association. This resulted in the development of a River Maintenance Management Plan and the implementation of alien vegetation infestation clearing projects. The Stellenbosch University was appointed for the implementation and for conducting the investigation and modeling of the Holsloot Weir Project which was completed in April 2021 at a cost of R76,95 million.

The visit concluded with a visit to a farm near De Doorns where the Committee was shown various designs for canopies with benches intended to mitigate injury to farm workers while being transported to the farm and back home. A distinctive feature of the structures was the relative ease by which they could be lifted from, and fitted to, the trucks by fork lifts. This allowed the truck to be used for general farm work during the day.

4. Resolutions

The Committee RESOLVED to engage with CapeNature on the progress of alien vegetation clearing in the Holsloot area.

5. Acknowledgements

The Committee expressed its appreciation to the officials and water association members for an informative engagement.



MR AP VAN DER WESTHUIZEN (MPP)

**CHAIRPERSON: STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING**

DATE: ____15 June 2021____