

Application for PE fish farm referred back to DEA

BEE Molewa, the minister of environmental affairs, announced that the application by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) regarding the development of a fish farm in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape, has been referred back to the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) for consideration.



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The decision is based on the undertaking by the DAFF that it would undertake a detailed assessment of the feasibility of an alternate location in Algoa Bay for the development.

DAFF, as the applicant, has also undertaken to conduct a detailed analysis of the projected revenue and employment opportunities likely to be created by the Sea Based Aquaculture Development Zone, measured against the perceived loss in revenue and employment opportunities as a result of the proposed project at the Algoa 1 site in the coastal city.

Signatures against environmental authorisation

DAFF submitted an application for the development of a Sea Based Aquaculture Development Zone for the farming of Fin Fish in Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth, in February 2011, following which an Environmental Authorisation was granted on 9 July 2014.

A total of 134 notices of intention to appeal in terms of Section 43 (1) of the National Environmental Management Act were thereafter submitted to the minister of environmental affairs. A total of 28 substantive appeals were then lodged by the appellants between 1 September 2014 and 30 October 2014 against the Environmental Authorisation granted to DAFF. An online petition against the proposed development at its approved location was also set up, which generated in excess of 17,000 signatures.

Considering an alternative site

Molewa said she had reached her decision on the appeal against the Environmental Authorisation, after taking into consideration material information contained in the project file, the outcome of consultations with the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, Nelson Mandela Bay Tourism and Business Chambers, the Airports Company of South Africa, tourism stakeholders and the appellants, as well as correspondence from the applicant.

"During the appeal process it became evident that the appellants were not opposed to aquaculture development in the provinces, but that they opposed the development at its present location, which is approximately 2km offshore from the popular tourist beach area in Port Elizabeth. Parties consulted had requested that the applicant consider an alternative site for the proposed project," said the minister.

DAFF has undertaken to conduct a comparative assessment of the present and alternate sites and to use the opportunity to further explore the feasibility of the area known as Algoa 5 as the preferred location for the project. DAFF has submitted that, following that process, it will resubmit an application for Environmental Authorisation to the department.

To link to the complete finding by the Minister, click [here](#)

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