



Leaders in Environmental Management

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## Earthlife 'shocked' by Erwin's nuclear plans

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Earthlife Africa says it is "shocked" that public enterprises minister Alec Erwin announced plans to build another conventional nuclear power station without first consulting the people who would have to pay for it.

But Eskom says the public will be able to have their say in a public participation process still to be launched.

They will also have a say in where the new nuclear station will be built, as Eskom says it is not definite that it will be built at Koeberg.

Koeberg is the only site licensed to carry a nuclear power station, but Eskom owns land on the coast in the Eastern Cape near Oyster Bay, in the Western Cape in the Overstrand and in the Northern Cape near Kommagas.

One of these sites could be used but licensing a new nuclear site takes a long time and is likely to run into strong opposition.

Eskom spokesperson Fani Zulu would not say which sites, apart from Koeberg, were likely to be considered, only that there were "a whole lot" of possible sites.

"There has to be a public participation process to select a site. We're also still looking at available nuclear technology and evaluating it before buying it," Zulu said.

Earthlife said that at an Electricity Crisis Committee meeting convened last week by Cosatu, an Eskom representative had assured them "there was no crisis in South Africa.

He also made a point of saying the fundamental problems faced by the Western Cape and its electricity supply were problems at Koeberg and the condition of transmission lines bringing power from Mpumalanga."

The meeting had been assured that upgrading of the transmission lines would be completed in 18 months. So why did South Africa need a new nuclear power station?

"The best case time by which the proposed power station will produce electricity is 2016, so it will be unable to meet short or medium term needs.

"It is a mystery why it is being proposed at this time," Earthlife said.