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Posted to the web on: 19 September 2008

## Eskom may build extra power plant

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### Energy Affairs Editor

WITH construction of two major coal-fired power stations under way, Eskom is investigating another in the Waterberg area of Limpopo, according to a notice for comments on an environment impact assessment issued earlier this week.

With security of electricity supply under constant threat due to a low reserve margin, Eskom is being pressed to ensure extra capacity. The utility has said it would double its capacity to 80000MW by 2026.

In a notice issued on behalf of Eskom in major newspapers, consultants Ninham Shand Consulting Services earlier this week said Eskom was considering building the coal-fired power station "and associated infrastructure", in the Waterberg "due to a growing demand for electricity".

Details of the mooted station are sketchy. Eskom spokesman Fani Zulu said no final decision had been taken.

Construction of Eskom's new coal-fired power stations is under way. These are the 4788MW Medupi plant in Limpopo and a 4818MW plant in Mpumalanga. Both facilities would have six generating units.

Energy analyst Cornelius van der Waal, of consultants Frost and Sullivan, said yesterday that given the shortage of power supply, the possible additional investment in a new plant was welcome.

"We really need that investment. Eskom has embarked on a programme to bring back to service mothballed power stations. While these will alleviate the problem, there is still a need for additional capacity," he said.

Camden, Komati and Grootvlei power stations were mothballed because of excess capacity in the late 1980s and 1990s. The stations' 23 generating units, totalling 38000MW of capacity, are scheduled to be operational by October 2011.

Van der Waal said Eskom had made progress since its build programme began in 2005. The utility's annual report said an extra 2582MW had been commissioned.

"They should be commended for the work they have done. The challenge for Eskom will be to find the skills to support the programme. We must also remember that, in addition to the coal-fired power stations, Eskom also has a nuclear build programme," he said.

construction of a new nuclear power station.

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