



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: CX Zwane
Telephone: 060 542 1108
Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 4124

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01 DECEMBER 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 48)

4124. Mrs M R Mohlala (EFF) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

In light of the concerning findings in the 2023 Blue Drop Watch Report, indicating that 15% of the water supply systems in the Republic are in poor and/or critical condition, what specific measures and/or immediate steps has his department undertaken to (a) address the identified shortcomings and (b) improve water quality compliance across these systems?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is prioritising grant applications aimed at addressing water supply systems which are in poor or critical condition. The Department allocated infrastructure grants worth more than R14 billion for the 2023/24 financial year to municipalities.

The DWS, together with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), and Nation Treasury have developed an action plan aimed at municipalities which have wastewater and/or drinking water systems that scored less than 10% in the Green Drop and/or Blue Drop assessments (i.e. municipalities which are performing the worst in terms of their water quality and sanitation services).

This plan has been approved by Cabinet and presented to COGTA MINMEC. The Departments are working together to ensure that the plan is implemented to improve the status of water services. This includes:

- Technical and engineering support and assistance
- Capacity building and training
- Financial management advice and support

The Department has issued non-compliance letters to water supply systems with poor drinking water quality compliance and in some cases these municipalities issued water advisory notices where the quality did not improve. Despite all the support being provided to municipalities, the drop reports indicate that water services continue to decline. There are limitations to which national support programmes can turn around the decline at municipal level.

Fundamental reforms are required to arrest and turn around the decline in municipal water and sanitation services. The Department will soon issue updated and more comprehensive national norms and standards for water and sanitation services for public comment. The DWS will also publish a National Regulatory Dashboard showing compliance with national norms and standards as monitored and reported amongst others by Blue Drop, Green Drop and No Drop Results.

Furthermore, the DWS has gazetted the Water Services Amendment Bill for public comment. The current Act distinguishes between roles of Water Services Authority (WSA) and Water Services Provider (WSP) in municipalities. WSA is the part of the municipality that is responsible for ensuring that water services are provided according to national norms and standards (the local regulator) whilst WSP is the part of the municipality which is responsible for providing the service. The Bill clarifies functions of WSAs and WSPs, including that billing and revenue collection for water is a WSP function.


The Bill introduces a compulsory operating license system for WSPs, to be managed by DWS as the national regulator. This will enable WSAs to ensure that WSPs have minimum competency, capability, and performance levels. The Bill will empower the Minister of Water and Sanitation to instruct a WSA to appoint a Water Services Provider that is licensed. The Bill will further provide for Minister to implement regulatory enforcement protocols (non-compliance notices, directives) for water services, and to make gross non-compliance an offence, similarly to the National Water Act.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED~~/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 7/12/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ ~~NOT APPROVED~~/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 12/12/23