



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: R Mathye
Telephone: 072 263 0745
Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 144

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 10 MARCH 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 5)

144. Mr C F B Smit (Limpopo: DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

(a) What actions have been taken to isolate (i) water treatment plants, (ii) water pumping facilities and (iii) sewer systems from the rest of the electricity network to ensure that such crucial services are not interrupted by Eskom blackouts, (b) how much budget is available to ensure this matter and (c) how much of such budget is allocated to transfer such facilities to alternatives and renewables?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

- a) Water and sanitation infrastructure is powered by electricity supplied directly by Eskom, and in some cases, water and sanitation infrastructure is powered by electricity supplied by municipalities, as electricity distributors. Municipalities can only apply to Eskom for exemption from loadshedding for areas directly supplied by Eskom. It is not possible for Eskom to exempt water and sanitation infrastructure which is powered by electricity supplied by municipalities from load shedding. Such infrastructure must be isolated by the municipalities themselves. The DWS cannot decide on behalf of municipalities on which municipal water and sanitation infrastructure to isolate from load-shedding, as such decisions must be taken by municipalities.
- b) Funding can be made available through DWS grant applications for new infrastructure, upgrade projects or refurbishment of infrastructure for such facilities. The costs will be determined in line with infrastructure conditional assessments or feasibility studies to be conducted.
- c) This challenge requires collaboration with municipalities, water boards and Eskom, among other institutions. The DWS has made the following recommendations for consideration:
- Water Boards and municipalities should endeavour to increase their water treatment and reservoir storage capacity to enable them to better manage periods of load shedding.
 - Households should be encouraged to install their own storage capacity, such as rainwater catchment tanks.
 - All municipalities and Water Boards should either apply to Eskom for exemptions from load shedding (where they obtain electricity directly from Eskom) or work with their municipal electricity departments to isolate their water and sanitation infrastructure. In some instances, isolating water and sanitation infrastructure might require additional switching and cabling to limit the size of affected electrical supply zones. Where Eskom directly supplies a strategic installation (such as a major Water Board pump station) it may be necessary for Eskom to limit the electricity supply zone area so as not to impede their load shedding options.
 - Municipalities which are Water Service Authorities should develop integrated response plans to keep water flowing during load shedding. These response plans should be integrated across the water and sanitation, electricity, and other divisions of the municipality.
 - Eskom should be requested to exempt Water Boards and municipalities from extra costs related to penalties when there is a sudden increase in pumping load that was not planned. These penalties are two-fold:
 - Penalties for exceeding the Notified Maximum Demand (NMD): Eskom sets the maximum electricity demand that a Water Board or municipality will be using based on its demand forecast. If demand increases; especially during emergencies and the NMD is exceeded by above 5%; Eskom then charges exceedance penalties.

- Costs increase due to starting of pumps during peak time periods. Starting of pumps consumes six times more kWh as compared to normal pump operation. The costs are even higher during peak periods since the peak tariffs are 6.1 times higher than the off-peak and 3.3 times higher than standard period.
- Eskom should review its processes for dealing with requests for exemptions from load shedding for water and sanitation infrastructure, with a view to making them simpler and efficient.

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


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 05/06/23 ✓

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED ✓


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

DATE: 14/4/23