



## water & sanitation

Department:  
Water and Sanitation  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Enquiries: D Sifunda  
Telephone: 082 393 8223  
Reference: 6/2/2/6

### NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

#### FOR WRITTEN REPLY

#### QUESTION NO 667

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 22 SEPTEMBER 2023  
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 35)

**667. Mr N M Hadebe (KwaZulu-Natal: IFP) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:**

What steps has his department taken to intervene in improving the quality of drinking water from the Sabie River?

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#### **MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION**

The Thaba Chweu Local Municipality is a Water Services Authority (WSA) which provides water and sanitation services to Sabie residents. The Municipality receives water from a fountain which flows through an old mine shaft to the Municipal Water Disinfection System for treatment purposes. The water disinfection system is made of three pump stations located at Simile, Harmony and Sabie Town.

The Department of Water and Sanitation was made aware of concerns regarding poor drinking water quality in Sabie by the Municipality on 22 August 2023. Following receipt of the report from the municipality, the Department advised the Local Municipality to issue a formal advisory notice and to provide alternative water supply to affected areas. Further actions taken include the following:


- Site investigation at the affected areas in Sabie on 23 August 2023 by DWS.
- The Department convened a meeting on 11 September 2023 to ascertain reasons for non-complaint water that was being supplied by the municipality to communities. It was established that the Municipality was failing to disinfect the water prior to distribution to the consumers due to a dysfunctional chemical dosing system.

- Following engagements with the Department, the municipality implemented pre-cautionary measures including flushing of the water from reservoirs and the network system; repairs and adjustment on chemical dosing system.
- A task team comprising of Thaba Chweu Local Municipality as the Water Services Authority, Ehlanzeni District Municipality and Mpumalanga Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, DWS and the South African Local Government Association was formulated to monitor the water quality and to also provide awareness to consumers. The Task Team is currently conducting inspections of the entire network to locate possible sources of contamination as part of the solution.
- On 20 September 2023 and 26 of September 2023 the Department collected samples of raw and chlorinated water at Simile reservoir, Harmony Hill Reservoir, Sabie Library and Huilboom reservoir. All microbiological sample results were compliant with SANS 241 requirements at all sampling points except for Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC) results at Huilboom reservoir exceeded numerical limit of the standard. The HPC determinant reflects operational rather than health risks and therefore does not pose health risks to consumers. After testing was done on 26 September, microbiological sample results were compliant with SANS 241 requirements at all sampling points. All sampling areas receive potable water from Sabie water supply system. All these results reveal that tap water supplied during the period which samples were taken was safe for human consumption.


The Department is continuing engagements with the Thaba Chweu Local Municipality and monitoring the drinking water quality until the limits are within the South African National Standards for drinking water (SANS 241).

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

  
**DR SEAN PHILLIPS**  
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL**  
**DATE: 01/14/23**

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED

  
**MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP**  
**MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION**  
**DATE: 08/12/23**