

Polluters must be held accountable

POLLUTION is a major problem affecting the environment, especially water resources, and polluters can no longer be allowed to continue on this destructive path.

The pollution of the country's water resources must stop. South Africa is a dry and water-scarce country and cannot afford such continuous pollution of its water resources. Every drop counts because water has no substitute. The pollution of water resources is a man-made problem – and basically the result of irresponsible human behaviour and actions.

This then calls for all those responsible for the pollution and destruction of water resources to be taken to task and held liable.

Polluters must be exposed – and they must also be named and shamed – because the pollution of water resources cannot be tolerated. Pollution poses a serious threat to water security as it negatively affects the quality of water, leading to less water fit for use.

Pollution of water resources simply means the loss of precious water, which South Africa cannot afford. This then calls for everyone to play a role in preventing the pollution of our water resources and to contribute towards water security for current and future generations.

The pollution of water resources negatively affects the health and socio-economic development of communities.

Pollution leads to water quality challenges, including waterborne diseases, poor quality or lost crops, the death of animals and aquatic species, and environmental degradation. The major challenge currently facing South Africa is sewage spillages, which contaminate the country's water resources. This is basically the result of blocked sewer pipes and dysfunctional waste water treatment plants.

The Department of Water and Sanitation – as the custodian of water resources, through the National Water Act – is pushing hard to enforce compliance by issuing notices, directives and even opening criminal cases against all transgressors who pollute water resources.

Recent court judgments and the continuing opening of criminal cases against municipalities that contribute to the pollution of water resources reaffirms the regulatory role of the department.

All water users need to comply with the prescripts of the National Water Act to help reduce the challenges of pollution.

These recent judgments show that pollution of water resources will not be tolerated, and polluters must stop the destruction of water resources and rehabilitate affected areas.

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