



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Reference: 6/2/2/6

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2556

DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 01 SEPTEMBER 2023
(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 27)

2556. Mr N G Myburgh (DA) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

- (1) Given the fact that the residents of three municipal towns in the Blue Crane Route have been battling a deluge of sewage leaks in the past five years, affecting critical service centres such as clinics, and threatening both human and environmental health in KwaNojoli, Cookhouse and Pearston, what steps has his department taken to address the specified situation;
- (2) whether he intends to lay criminal charges against officials and politicians responsible for the ongoing human rights violations flowing from these sewage leaks; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

- (1) The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has taken steps to address the various complaints received in relation to sewage leakages affecting Blue Crane Route Local Municipality (BCRLM) communities.

These have been investigated and the DWS in its regulatory role, has taken the following actions against BCRLM:

- Issued a Directive dated 31 October 2019 for the failing Somerset East sewage pump station.
- Notice of Pollution dated 19 December 2020 for the Aeroville pump station.
- Notice of failure to comply with license conditions dated 18 February 2021.

- Non-compliance letter for poor Green Drop Report Audit Findings dated 08 April 2022.
 - Directive for failure to address pollution of the Somerset East Irrigation canal dated 22 February 2023.
 - Notice of breach of obligation for sewer spillages in Cookhouse and Somerset East dated 25 July 2023.
- (2) The DWS takes a range of regulatory actions in terms of the National Water Act, including issuing non-compliance notices, directives, taking civil action, and as a last resort, laying criminal charges against polluting municipalities. Criminal charges has not been pursued as yet because the municipality has been responsive to the non-compliance directives and directives as indicated below:
- The municipality has submitted a suitable action plan to address various non-compliances. The implementation thereof is being monitored by the DWS. To this end, all blockages have been cleared and vandalised cables replaced, however the mechanical and electrical Professional Services Provider is awaiting delivery of spares and refurbished pumps for the high lift pump, the Mayele pump station and the Memese pump station all at Somerset East.
 - The municipality has also appointed a new Water Services Manager who commenced duty on 01 August 2023
 - The Ministry met with MEC of Co-Operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the Mayor and Leadership of BCRLM on 16 August 2023 during the Ministerial visit to the Eastern Cape, where provincial and municipal leadership committed to work towards improving wastewater management.

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



DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 04/09/23

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ NOT APPROVED/ AMENDED



MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

DATE: 08/09/23