

EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

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Eastern Cape Provincial Legislature
Bhisho
Eastern Cape



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To: MEC X. Nqatha

NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY – LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER - DROUGHT

I am writing to you to impress upon you the seriousness and the urgency of the 'other disaster' facing the province of the Eastern Cape, which is the drought disaster on the Western side of the province in the Kouga and Nelson Mandela Bay Municipalities.

As of yesterday the dam levels were critically low, the Kouga dam was on 12.62%, the Impofu dam on 16.45%, Churchill dam on 69.49% and the Groendal dam on 37.37% (which gives NMBM and average combined remaining water supply of 22.36%).

This situation is further aggravated by the fact that:

- a) Drilling around the Impofu dam has yielded no water.
- b) There has been no progress in building the barge to allow for further water extraction from the Impofu dam.
- c) Phase 3 of the Nooitgedagt Water Scheme has not been commissioned since June 2019 which would provide an additional 210 Mega Litres.

- d) Upgrades to the channel being constructed to relay water between Gariep Dam and Nooitgedaght is still not complete.
- e) Continuous reference by the NMBM administration to a desalination plant to provide another 15 Mega Litres as a possible solution to the current drought - while it is clear that a desalination plant of this size and nature can take an average of 8 years to commission and cannot be considered as a viable solution to the current drought disaster but rather a long term solution or an alternative.
- f) No progress have been made in terms of the spending of the R200 million originally allocated for NMBM drought relief – money which the NMBM stands to loose at the end of this financial year.

Honourable MEC, as you are aware many areas on the Western side of the Eastern Cape are already struggling with water shortages and water 'outages' which is further compounded by the fact that there are over 11 000 active water leaks in NMBM resulting in water losses of 46.6%.

Although the Kouga Municipality has yesterday (20 April 2020) gazetted the extension of its local state of disaster in terms of section 55(5)(c) of the Disaster Management Act 57 of 2002 as originally published in Government Gazette 4400 of 16 March 2020 by another month, the fact remains that with the Kouga dam on 12.62%, running out of water in Kouga is imminent and the consequences will be disastrous for the residents and for the farmers in the Gamtoos Valley (one of the largest contributors to the economy of the EC) which are reliant on water from this dam for irrigation.

The reality is that NMBM and Kouga Municipality is running out of water. My request is therefore that the portfolio committee of Cooperative Governance in the Eastern Cape convenes and urgent meeting to focus attention on the drought disaster and to discuss possible measures to assist NMBM and Kouga Municipality in this regard.

Kind Regards,

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