



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
Democratic Alliance Member of the Provincial Legislature
The Hon. Retief Odendaal, MPL.



Provincial Legislature
Private Bag x0051
Bhisho, 5605

Cell: 082 462 0668

Page 1 of 2

DATE: 14th April 2020

HON MINISTER LINDIWE SISULU MP

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION

PER EMAIL

Dear Minister Sisulu,

RE: EXTENDED DROUGHT NELSON MANDELA BAY METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY

The matter above has reference.

Last week, I wrote a letter to the Hon Premier of the Eastern Cape, Premier Oscar Mabuyane MPL, and requested that he personally intervenes in the crisis that is busy unfolding in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Bay Municipality (NMBMM). I have attached said letter hereto for ease of reference.

The combined capacity of dam levels in NMMBM was down to 23.77% as at Monday the 6th of April 2020. Notwithstanding the aforesaid, the administration neglected to timeously extent the state of disaster and to gazette same in the Provincial Gazette. This is of a particular concern given the fact that a failure to either declare a disaster or in this case, extent a state of disaster can cause significant delays insofar as procurement processes are concerned.

In this regard, I wish to point out that NMMBM has already experienced several delays in implementing drought-related projects with the disaster funding that the administration received for the 2019/20 financial year. It is my considered opinion that the city is likely to forfeit a substantial portion of this funding at the financial year-end due to the fact that same will not be committed.

Even more concerning, however, is the non-existence of a comprehensive communication plan on the looming disaster. There is almost "radio silence" from the metro administration on the matter and certainly no continuous communications strategy to urge its 1.2 Million residents to reduce consumption in order to avert disaster urgently.

In addition, it must be remembered that it is also not just the residents of NMBMM that makes use of the water forthcoming from these supply dams. Thousands of residents in the Kouga Municipality (Jeffrey's Bay, St Francis Bay, Humansdorp and Hankey) is also reliant on water forthcoming from the Kouga Dam.

The Kouga Dam is the main supply dam to NMBMM, and its capacity has dropped to a mere 14.58%. Farmers in the Gamtoos Valley, an area which is considered to be one of the biggest producers of

Citrus Fruit in the country, also receives its water for irrigation from the Kouga Dam. Any significant cut in the water allocation to these farmers will no doubt have a disastrous effect on their production and ultimately on the Eastern Cape economy.

Whilst I understand that the country is currently grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, water security in NMMBM and surrounding areas are of critical importance given the severity of the extended drought in the region as well as the size of its population and any lack of decisive action by the administration can, therefore, hold disastrous consequences for the metro later this year.

Given the fact that very little information is forthcoming from NMMBM insofar as its plans to deal with potential water shortages are concerned, I have also submitted a series of questions in this regard to the Honourable MEC for CoGTA, Hon Xolile Nqata MPL. I have attached said questions hereto for ease of reference.

I now call upon you to urgently intervene in the matter at hand and to request your officials to immediately interact with the municipal officials on their plans pertaining to the crisis. Furthermore, I kindly request that the Department of Water issues a public statement on the state of the drought in NMBMM as well as the plans that are currently in place to prevent disaster herein. The public has a right to know whether plans have been put in place to safeguard their interests and right now, such information is simply not forthcoming from the administration.

Given the current combined levels of the supply dams as well as the rainfall forecasted for the catchment areas over the next couple of months, it is almost a mathematical certainty that dam levels will drop well below intake levels. As such, we request your urgent intervention on behalf of all of the residents in NMBMM.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



.....

Retief Odendaal, MPL

FREEDOM. FAIRNESS. OPPORTUNITY. DIVERSITY.