



EASTERN CAPE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Retief Odendaal, MPL

Provincial Legislature
Private Bag x0051 or
Independence Ave
Bhisho, 5605

Tel: 040 608 0284
Cell: 082 374 9232
Email: retiefodendaal1@gmail.com



Date: 29 June 2021

**MINISTER OF HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION
MINISTER LINDIWE SISULU MP**

AND

**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL
MR TREVOR BELZAR**

Dear Minister and Acting Director-General

**RE: UNTREATED SEWAGE AND WASTEWATER SPILLING INTO THE GREAT
FISH RIVER**

I refer to the aforementioned matter and correspondence addressed to the Municipal Manager of the Chris Hani District Municipality (CHDM), which you will find attached hereto.

Kindly note that I have previously addressed correspondences to your good offices regarding the ongoing mismanagement of the sanitation competency by CHDM in the Eastern Cape.

As you no doubt know, the water that the Eastern Cape receive from the Teebus-tunnel via the Gariiep-Fish scheme is a lifeline to our parched province. Thousands of farmers and many towns and villages, including the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality, depend on this water.

Over the last number of years, CHDM has polluted the Great Fish River because of its inability to manage its sewage infrastructure, despite obtaining the water and sanitation competency from local municipalities in 2014.

That said, it would seem as if these sewage spillages are becoming far more frequent

and severe in nature. In fact, the latest sewage spillages are of such a severe nature that I believe it poses a serious health risk to livestock and, more importantly, people.

Two sewage pump stations in Cradock (Michausdal and Lingelihle) have been dysfunctional and/or malfunctioning since Friday, 18th of June 2021. As a result, massive amounts of untreated sewage and wastewater have been flowing directly into the Great Fish River. I believe that same is starting to affect our farming communities adversely.

Over the last number of weeks, I have received regular reports of farmers who have lost livestock due to Cryptosporidiosis. These farmers all utilise water from the Fish River either as drinking water for livestock or for irrigation purposes.

Cryptosporidiosis is a disease that is caused by the *Cryptosporidium parvum*, a type of intestinal parasite. The disease is waterborne and normally originates where the drinking water or feed of livestock that has been contaminated by untreated sewage.

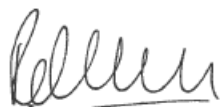
I believe that the increased instances of sewage spills that have led to mass contamination of the Fish River have been the sole cause of this recent spate of livestock losses due to Cryptosporidiosis.

It is, of course, not unreasonable to fear that if the extent of the pollution in the river can lead to livestock losses, it can easily hold severe consequences for human health as well.

Given the aforesaid, we request your urgent intervention with the sewage spills into the Great Fish River at Cradock.

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

Sincerely,



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**HON. RETIEF ODENDAAL, MPL
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE MEMBER OF THE EC PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
DA CONSTITUENCY LEADER, EC MIDLAND (CRADOCK/MIDDELBURG)**

**CC: MEC COGTA: Hon XE Nqata
Executive Mayor CHDM: Cllr Gela**

Executive Mayor IYM: Cllr Zonke
Municipal Manager CHDM: Mr G Mashiyi



A People's Assembly for Good Governance
Independence Avenue, Bhisho, 5600 / Private Bag X0051, Bhisho, 5605
Website: www.eclegislature.gov.za
Twitter: @eclegislature



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Date: 29 June 2021

**THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER
CHRIS HANI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
MR GCOBANI MASHIYI
PER EMAIL**

Dear Sir,

RE: UNTREATED SEWAGE AND WASTEWATER SPILLING INTO THE GREAT FISH RIVER

I refer to the aforementioned matter and to my unanswered correspondence dated the 18th of June 2021.

Kindly note that your officials have to date failed to address the sewage spillages in Cradock. As a result, massive quantities of raw, untreated sewage and effluent continue to flow into the Great Fish River on a daily basis.

I wish to place on record that your continued unwillingness to address this matter is directly in conflict with Section 151 (1) (h), (i) and (j) of the National Water Act 36 of 1998. As such, please note that your lack of action to prevent the aforesaid natural watercourse from being polluted, whilst you have been made aware of the ongoing pollution, CONSTITUTES A CRIMINAL OFFENCE in terms of the Act.

Kindly note that I have reported the matter to the Department of Water Affairs and will

now proceed to endeavour to obtain test results of water samples taken from the Fish River recently to prove that dangerously high levels of E.coli and other faecal coliforms are present in the water. Should these test results prove that significant amounts of faecal coliforms are present in the samples, I reserve my right to pursue the matter criminally.

I would, as such, strongly advise that you immediately put measures in place to prevent any further contamination of the Great Fish River.

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

Sincerely,



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**HON. RETIEF ODENDAAL, MPL
DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE MEMBER OF THE EC PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE
DA CONSTITUENCY LEADER, EC MIDLAND (CRADOCK/MIDDELBURG)**

**Cc: Cllr Wongama Gela, Executive Mayor CHDM
Cllr Noncedo Zonke, Executive Mayor IYM**



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