



Provincial Legislature

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6 MAY 2022

MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

MINISTER SENZO MCHUNU

AND

DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF WATER AND SANITATION

DR SEAN PHILLIPS

Dear Minister and Director-General

**RE: OVER-EXTRACTION OF WATER BY NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY
FROM THE KOUGA AND KROMME BULK WATER SYSTEMS**

I refer to the aforementioned matter.

As you are no doubt aware, the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality (NMBMM) and the Kouga Local Municipality are on the brink of disaster as these municipalities are fast running out of water. Combined dam storage levels were standing at a record low of 13,02% as of 4 May 2022.

All indications are that the Kromme system, including the Churchill and Impofu dams, will be depleted within 35-45 days. The Loerie Dam, which provides bulk water from the Kouga system to NMBMM, is set to be depleted in 65 days.

Notwithstanding this fast approaching crisis, NMBMM continues to significantly overdraw bulk water from both the Kromme system and the Kouga system. Insofar as the Kouga system is concerned, as of 30 April 2022, NMBMM has already withdrawn 180% of their water quota for the year.

Whilst abstraction from the Kouga system has somewhat slowed down, NMBMM is now withdrawing a staggering 90 ML of bulk water a day from the Kromme system (60 ML from Churchill and 30 ML from Impofu), which is severely expediting the imminent dam failure events.

This reckless overdrawing is not just compromising NMB but also the Kouga Local Municipality as well as other roleplayers. Unfortunately, the Kouga Local Municipality and the other roleplayers have no control over the abstraction from these systems and are thus being unfairly and severely prejudiced by an irresponsible NMBMM who continues with this reckless behaviour.

The depletion of the Churchill and Impofu dams will have catastrophic consequences for this region. Upon depletion of these dams, nearly a third of NMBMM will have no water reticulation, whilst Kouga Local Municipality will have to almost solely and unsustainably rely on just groundwater resources.

It is therefore absolutely imperative that dam failure has to be prevented or, at the very least, pushed out as far as possible. If we are able to use our bulk water resources more responsibly, we should be able to buy sufficient time in order to complete most of the drought mitigation and/or water augmentation projects as well as move us into the rainy season.

Against this backdrop, I want to put it on record that the Department of Water Affairs (DWA) has, thus far, failed to prevent the overdrawn of dams by NMBMM. This has exposed NMBMM but also other roleplayers, who have no control over the abstraction from the dams but who remain entitled to their allocation, to adverse risk.

I, therefore, call upon you to immediately ensure by whatever means necessary that NMBMM does not exceed its originally allocated average daily quota of abstraction, taking into account the restrictions that were imposed on the various roleplayers.

Ideally, we would have wanted NMBMM to have stayed within the total allocated quota for the water year. This is no longer possible as the metro has already exceeded its allocated quota from both the Kouga and the Kromme systems.

Bulk water supply remains a national competency. I trust that DWA will do absolutely everything to prevent catastrophic dam failure due to continued reckless and irresponsible abstraction.

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

Sincerely,



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Retief Odendaal, MPL

LLB (NMMU)

DA Constituency Leader, Kouga Municipality

1. **HON XOLILE NQATHA**
MEC: COOPERATIVE GOVERNANCE & TRADITIONAL AFFAIRS
2. **CLLR EUGENE JOHNSON**
EXECUTIVE MAYOR: NELSON MANDELA BAY MUNICIPALITY
3. **CLLR HORATIO HENDRICKS**
EXECUTIVE MAYOR: KOUGA MUNICIPALITY