

**The collapse of water infrastructure will put tremendous pressure on the South African economy and food security.**

By **Leon Basson MP**—DA Shadow Minister for Water and Sanitation

Chairperson/Speaker,

South Africa is one of the few countries in the world that enshrines the basic right to sufficient water in its [Constitution](#).

Although we acknowledge that progress has been made, much remains to be done to fulfil that right!

The Department's legislative mandate ensures that the country's water resources are protected, managed, and controlled by regulating and supporting effective water supply and sanitation delivery.

Before we unpack our water and sanitation challenges, allow me to congratulate Dr. Sean Phillips on his appointment as the Director-General for Water and Sanitation.

Dr. Phillips, the DA fully supports your appointment and we trust that you will not be bogged down by political interference in cleaning up and fixing the Department of Water and Sanitation.

Chairperson, as we all know, Water and Sanitation is in a bad state, still affected by the toxic Nomvula Mokonyane\_virus and must be cleaned up now!

Furthermore, Minister Sisulu also added her flavour in confusing matters by appointing advisory committees that duplicated work already done in the department, costing the ratepayers R 63 million.

The DA congratulates Minister Senzo Mchunu for dissolving the Sisulu advisory committees, saving us millions.

Minister, the SIU must follow the money on the R 35 million kickback paid out on the SAP contract. Where did the money go and who benefited?

Chairperson, we received the 2022 Blue Drop Progress Report on 1186 water purification systems in the country that clean 31 911 million litres of drinking water every day.

The report reveals that 48% of the country's water supply systems were judged to be low risk, 18% medium risk, and 34% high or critical risk.

**This result is shocking!**

Now the question is: How safe is our drinking water?

To answer this, I quote from the report

“Although some regions have performed better than others, DWS is concerned about the poor water quality in the country”.

Hierdie resultate is skokkend en moet dringend aangespreek word.

The 2022 Green Drop Report covers 995 wastewater treatment works in the country and the outcome just confirms the DA’s warning over the last 8 years of oversight on the critical state of our water infrastructure.

Chairperson, let’s unpack this report!

- Only 23 wastewater treatment works qualified for Green Drop Certification compared to 60 in 2013. This is a 260 % drop in Green Drop Certification since 2013.
- 78% of Limpopo’s wastewater treatment works have the highest critical risk in the country with the Western Cape with the lowest critical risk of only 11%.

That’s not all chairperson, listen to this...

The report shows that 102 out of the 115 wastewater treatment plants under the control of Minister de Lille and her department are at critical risk, with an average Green Drop score of only 12%. This implies a 90% failure under her leadership.

Minister de Lille, first you gave us the R40 million washing line and now you are dumping 40 million litres of real shit into the country's rivers and streams every day. What a disgrace. We need to take firm action against polluters and issue huge fines and lock up those responsible for pollution.

Minister, we must now implement the polluter must pay principle.

South Africa’s water infrastructure is at risk of failure and this deepening crisis requires leaders from all role players in the water sector to address these challenges.

The DA believes that through meaningful public-private partnerships, a solution can be found. Water specialists indicated that more than R 900 billion will be needed in the next 10 years on infrastructure, to avoid a full-scale water crisis.

We must also note that R 100 billion is needed on mega infrastructure projects with only R 4 billion available.

Chairperson, we can’t keep on running water infrastructure if we don’t look after it. If you don’t maintain it, it will break, and then ... Bang! Suddenly you hit the cliff and the entire infrastructure collapse.

This is starting to happen in some areas of the country.

Minister die DA se boodskap aan u is baie duidelik – Wanneer Suid Afrika se water infrastruktuur in duie stort, sal dit 56 miljoen mense affekteer, ryk of arm, swart of wit, dit sal geweldige druk plaas op die Suid Afrikaanse ekonomie en voedselsekerheid.

Minister, you have your work cut out for you, but unfortunately minister, your ANC government has dropped the ball and is not living up to the slogan: **Water is life-Sanitation is dignity.**

And so, chairperson, South Africans continue to suffer without water not because of drought but because of corruption and mismanagement by this ANC government.

I thank you.

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