



Mr M J Cuthbert MP  
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Dear Mr Cuthbert

**REQUEST FOR DEBATE ON AN URGENT MATTER OF NATIONAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THEFT AND VANDALISM OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

Your letter dated 24 May 2022, bears reference.

Having considered your request, I wish to advise that the matter of the economic impact of theft and vandalism of public infrastructure is indeed serious and should be considered by the National Assembly.

For this reason, your request has been acceded to in terms of Rule 130 and the Programme Committee will be asked to identify an appropriate slot for the debate to take place.

Yours sincerely,

  
Ms N N Mapisa-Nqakula, MP  
Speaker of the National Assembly

Date: 31 May, 2022



24 May 2022

Ms N N Mapisa-Nqakula, MP  
Speaker of the National Assembly  
Parliament of the Republic of South Africa  
CAPE TOWN  
8001

Dear Madam Speaker,

**REQUEST FOR DEBATE OF URGENT MATTER OF NATIONAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE IN TERMS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RULE 130 ON THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE THEFT AND VANDALISM OF PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

I write to you in terms of National Assembly Rule 130 to request that you schedule a debate of urgent national public importance on the economic impact of the theft and vandalism of public infrastructure.

In July 2021, Eskom, the Passenger Rail Agency of SA (PRASA), Transnet and Telkom reported that the theft and vandalism of public infrastructure meant that the entities incurred a direct loss of R 7 billion per annum as well as a knock-on effect for the broader economy to the tune of R 187 billion.

Every day, we see reports in the media of our public infrastructure lying in ruins or at worst entirely lifted from the site in which it was located.

The export economy, local government service delivery and public transportation are most severely affected by this scourge.

It is estimated by the Minerals Council South Africa that coal, iron ore and chrome companies missed out on about R 35 billion last year alone from contracted volumes that could not reach ports because of our failing rail network.

To compound the regular blackouts which businesses and households are subjected to by Eskom, the assault on municipal electrical infrastructure cripples service delivery, leaves residents more susceptible to crime and strangles local economic development.

Furthermore, this impacts on the ability of a municipality to perform one of its constitutional competences in particular – the reticulation of electricity.

Mr Mathew John Cuthbert, MP  
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Our passenger rail sector too has come under severe strain as a result of this crisis. It is commonplace that many of our lines, coaches and tracks are non-existent in our local towns and cities.

PRASA estimates that: *"Compared to the pre-pandemic era where Metrorail was spending an average of R 70 million per year on vandalism costs, ... the cost of vandalism to all train infrastructure will total just over R 4 billion."*

The available evidence proves just how severe the impact of theft and vandalism of our electricity, rail and municipal infrastructure is.

It is my considered view that, in light of the revelation last week by the Minister of Public Enterprises, Mr P J Gordhan, MP, that cable theft at the Hendrina Power Station contributed towards South Africa being placed onto Stage 4 electricity blackouts, and daily report emerging of further incidents of cable and other electricity infrastructure, and noting that electricity blackouts costs the economy approximately R 500 million per stage per day, it is absolute necessary that the theft and vandalism of public infrastructure is urgently brought before the Assembly for debate.

As is required by NA Rule 130(8)(c)(i), this is a matter of so serious a nature that it requires the Assembly's urgent attention. Furthermore, in accordance with NA Rule 130(8)(e), this is a matter which relates to specific instances of recent occurrence of the theft and vandalism of public infrastructure.

I hereby request that you schedule at your earliest convenience a debate of urgent national public importance on the economic impact of the theft and vandalism of public infrastructure.

I look forward to your favourable response.

Yours faithfully,



**M J Cuthbert MP**  
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