Democratic Alliance speech by

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Gauteng Environment budget does not address air pollution and keeping water sources clean

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**Honourable Speaker**,

**Members of the Legislature,**

The Democratic Alliance (DA) Gauteng stands before this House today unable to support the Department of Environment's budget, and frankly, we are appalled by what we see before us. This is not merely a budget; it is a betrayal of every Gauteng resident who deserves clean air to breathe and a healthy environment to live in.

Premier Lesufi stood before us promising a clean and healthy environment for all residents. President Ramaphosa echoed these same sentiments in his State of the Nation Address, highlighting the urgent need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Yet what do we see in this budget? Empty promises with no substance, no action plans, and certainly no financial backing.

The numbers tell a damning story. Infrastructure projects have been slashed by 10%. How on earth does this government expect to tackle climate change when it cannot even fund basic infrastructure? We need robust emission reduction plans for our metallurgical and transport sectors, yet this budget makes such initiatives impossible.

But it gets worse. In June 2025, a workshop revealed the shocking state of our air quality monitoring stations. Out of 21 stations across our industrialised province, only eight are functioning, 10 are out of commission, and most haven't been maintained since 2023. This is not just negligence; it is gross incompetence.

Of the 15 priority stations desperately needing replacement, funding has been completely ignored. Basic calibration and maintenance support to municipalities has been abandoned. How can we protect our residents from air pollution when we cannot even monitor it properly?

The mismanagement extends beyond monitoring. Strategic water source areas under protection have been reduced by 1%. Land under rehabilitation has been slashed from 5,000 hectares to just 3,600 hectares. Where is the project management expertise to oversee these critical programmes? It simply does not exist.

This government's inability to maintain facilities is scandalous. Equipment lies broken, monitoring stations sit idle, and rehabilitation projects are scaled back rather than expanded. The financial management is equally abysmal and cutting budgets where investment is most needed, while failing to deliver on existing commitments is a damning indictment on this department.

Environmental Management Services shows no meaningful job creation or programme development. In a province crying out for environmental intervention, this department offers nothing but managed decline.

The residents of Gauteng are breathing polluted air whilst this government plays politics with their health. Children develop respiratory conditions, families suffer from environmental degradation, and our natural resources are squandered through sheer administrative incompetence.

This budget fails to prepare Gauteng for climate change. It fails to mitigate current air pollution. It fails to protect our water sources. Most fundamentally, it fails the people of Gauteng who deserve competent governance and environmental protection.

The DA-led Gauteng provincial government would provide a credible budget that addresses these numerous challenges with proper funding, competent project management, and genuine commitment to environmental protection. Until this government demonstrates it can manage public finances responsibly and deliver on its environmental promises, we cannot and will not support this inadequate budget.

The time for empty rhetoric has passed. Gauteng's environment and its people deserve better than this shameful offering.

Thank you.

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