



forestry, fisheries & the environment

Department:
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

(For oral reply)

QUESTION NO. 295 { CW265E }

INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 17 of 2023

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Mr N M Hadebe (KwaZulu-Natal: IFP) to ask the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment:

With reference to the recorded water quality results at the end of 2022 (details furnished), how has her department worked together with other relevant departments to repair sewage infrastructure, as sewage spills were the reason for beach closures?

295. THE MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT REPLIES:

The Department of Water & Sanitation (DWS) is mandated to ensure that the country's water resources are protected, managed and developed by regulating and supporting the delivery of effective water supply and sanitation. This also covers the maintenance of waste water services, including treatment and disposal.

The Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) has and continues to engage with the DWS and eThekweni Municipality in relation to specific sewage pollution incidents. This engagement commenced prior to the infrastructural damage caused to the sewage system pursuant to the April 2022 flooding and continues to date.

To this end, the Environmental Management Inspectorate within the DFFE has been monitoring compliance by the eThekweni Municipality and has taken enforcement action against the municipality for non-compliance in the form of administrative notices, as well as the initiation of criminal proceedings in respect of contraventions of the environmental legislation, including the National Environmental Management: Integrated Coastal Management Act, 2008 (Act No. 24 of 2008) (ICM Act). Criminal cases have also been opened in respect of failure by the municipality to comply with administrative notices issued. In addition, and where required, the DFFE supports the provincial Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs in its efforts to bring the eThekweni Municipality into compliance.

On 16 November 2022, ActionSA instituted court proceedings out of the Durban High Court under case number D11938/2022 against the Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment, the eThekweni Municipality and six others in respect of the sewage issues within eThekweni. Through this court process, the DFFE is engaging with all parties with a view to settling the matter through the agreement of an action plan to be tabled by the eThekweni Municipality detailing how it intends to solve the problem. In this regard, it should be noted that at a meeting that took place between the parties in the above matter on 29 March 2023, it was confirmed that the eThekweni Municipality received an amount of R1,5 billion from the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) during March 2023 and that it is embarking on a procurement process to appoint service providers to undertake the necessary remedial/repair work.

The DFFE is committed to ensuring that the eThekweni Municipality complies with the relevant environmental legislation. The DFFE looks forward to receipt of a detailed action plan explaining how the municipality intends to repair defective waste-water infrastructure networks to prevent further environmental harm.

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MS B D CREECY, MP
MINISTER OF FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

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