



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

National Government relaxes water restrictions for urban and agricultural use in the Western Cape

04 December 2018

Prior to the rainfall in the recent rainy season in the province, the water supply systems in the Western Cape were severely constrained as a result of lower than normal rainfall over the previous three (3) years. In a bid to curb excessive use and stretch water security the Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) imposed water restrictions of 45% on domestic use, and 60% on agricultural use.

For the 2018 season, the Western Cape Water Supply System (WCWSS) has received relatively good rains which led to good inflows to the system's six dams. According to the report of 03 December 2018 the combined average dam levels for WCWSS is 69,68%, a notable increase as compared to the 34,74% at the same time last year.

Rashid Khan, Regional Head of the Western Cape Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) says that water availability at this time is much healthier than a year or two ago during the debilitating drought that we experienced.

Following good seasonal rainfalls the National Government has decided to relax water restrictions as follows and as per the Government Gazette dated and published on 03 December 2018:

- From 45% to 10% for domestic use, and
- From 60% to 10% for agricultural use.

Khan says the decision to relax water restrictions is based on the hydrological data that was recently updated by DWS through a scientific model. The model shows that reducing water restrictions will bring the system into balance and it will then be operated to ensure security of supply to both urban and agricultural users.

Khan further states that the reduction of restrictions is residual and is also aligned to climate change impacts. DWS stresses the importance of using alternative water sources to stretch water availability. It must be noted that these restrictions applied to bulk water.

The DWS together with other water specialists will monitor the situation and engage users through scheduled drought forums, as well as take appropriate steps to ensure uninterrupted water supply.

ENDS

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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