



MEDIA STATEMENT

DWS Deputy Minister Mahlobo calls for safe interim water relief for Hammanskraal

30 August 2019

The Deputy Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Mr David Mahlobo, on Friday, 30 August 2019, called on the City of Tshwane to ensure the water provided by tankers to residents of Hammanskraal is safe for consumption.

This is in line with the directive given to the City by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on receipt of the results of a joint sampling of the water in Hammanskraal by the DWS and the City. The water was tested by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the results of which indicated that the water was unsafe to drink.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo was speaking during an oversight visit by the Portfolio Committee on Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation to the Rooiwal Waste Water Treatment Works.

Members of the portfolio committee conducted the oversight visit to familiarise themselves with the extent of poor water quality and to assess whether there are plans in place to provide clean potable to residents.

The portfolio committee was joined in the visit by the Mayor of the City of Tshwane, Mr Stevens Mokgalapa, DWS Gauteng Provincial Head, Mr Sibusiso Mthembu and the Provincial Manager of the SA Human Rights Commission, Mr Buang Jones.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo said the last time he visited the treatment works they could see there was malfunction of the system but that the situation has deteriorated even further.

He said the municipality would be supported by the department and the provincial government to sensitise communities that the water residents drink from the Temba Treatment Works is unfit for human consumption.

“The municipality has a tankering system and our message is that the water must be fit for use; and that there must be clear schedules when these tankers are moving into each area,” Deputy Minister Mahlobo said, adding that it must be ensured that communities are available when tankers deliver water.

Deputy Minister Mahlobo cautioned that the water delivered by tankers is meant as a short-term relief and is not to be sold, reiterating that residents must not be made to pay for the water.

He said the department will be engaging with the Mayor to urgently address the issue of chlorination as the water is now going out of the system without chlorination and this may affect the whole city.

“The municipality must make sure that within the shortest possible period the system is chlorinated and that the chlorine is here,” Deputy Minister Mahlobo said.





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Chairperson of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation, Ms Machwene Rosina Semenya, said they are expecting a report from the three spheres of government on the kinds of interventions they are going to make to bring clean potable water to residents.

Ms Semenya said one of the most important tasks is to get a report on an assessment on whether the municipality has the capacity to operate such a big system. She urged the department to assist the City to get properly qualified people to run the system.

Ms Semenya said: "If you run a system without chlorine, the water goes back into the river without disinfection. It means you are transporting diseases and we are saying the government must intervene in this matter as they are doing with the Vaal River. It must arrest the situation before it becomes a situation where lives are lost."

End

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