**COMMITTEE REQUESTS ASBESTOS REMEDIAL PLAN FROM DEPARTMENT**
Parliament, Friday, 13 September 2019 – The Portfolio Committee on Environment, Forestry and Fisheries has requested a credible asbestos remedial plan within three months from the Department of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries.

The committee also told the department to work with other government departments with responsibility to come up with the remedial plan. The committee criticised the department for dragging its feet on the issue.

The committee was informed that in 2013 Cabinet approved a plan and funding model, but six years on there is no clarity on what has been achieved. It is for this reason that the committee has asked the department to prioritise the process.

On the issue of air quality management, the committee has urged the department to fulfil its obligation to implement existing air quality legislation. Section 24(a) of the Bill of Rights clearly states that everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or wellbeing. Furthermore, the department is responsible for the implementation of the Air Quality Act. Thus, the department has an obligation to ensure that everyone has access to healthy air and the committee, in turn, is responsible for holding the department accountable.

The committee emphasised that the department is also responsible for ensuring that it coordinates with other responsible organs of state, such as the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs and the South African Local Government Association, to ensure that municipalities play their part in this regard.

ISSUED BY THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNICATION SERVICES ON BEHALF OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, FORESTRY AND FISHERIES, MR FIKILE XASA.