

**MINISTER**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 1217**

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**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation:**

Whether she has been informed that the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality has been unable to enforce environmental legislation in terms of the National Water Act, Act 36 of 1998, citing a lack of funding and resources to address the pollution of the Umbilo River, Palmiet River and Umgeni River which is posing serious health risks to residents and decimating river ecosystems; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what steps has she taken to assist the municipality to enforce environmental legislation? NW1522E

**REPLY:**

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) is aware that challenges have been experienced with the quality of effluent quality from the Umbilo Waste Water Treatment Works. There have also been issues of non-compliance and pollution incidents with respect to the Umbilo, Palmiet and Umngeni Rivers. The eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality have addressed most of the concerns after my department issued Notices and Directives as follows:

1. **Umbilo River** - Three (3) Non-Compliance Notices were issued in 2019 on 26 September, 25 November and 13 December. Another notice was issued on 10 June 2020.
2. **Palmiet River** - Non-Compliance Notice were issued in 2018, related to surcharging manholes
3. **Umngeni River** - A Non-Compliance Notice was issued on 12 September 2019, related to surcharging manholes and sewer overflow from a pump station

The pollution of the Umbilo River occurred as a result of outstanding mechanical and electrical repairs due to budget challenges. Upon engagement with the DWS, the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality has indicated that a process is now underway to appoint service providers urgently to undertake the necessary repairs which should be completed in August. The budgets constraints that were experienced towards the end of the last financial year (2019/2020) have been resolved with the beginning of the 2020/21 financial year.