

Municipality fined R150m for contravening water and environmental laws

The Department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) has welcomed the heavy fine imposed on Govan Mbeki Local Municipality for polluting water resources and contravening environmental legislation.



Image source: Yogendra Singh from [Pexels](#)

Govan Mbeki Local Municipality in Mpumalanga province was fined R150m for five counts relating to contravening the National Environmental Waste Management Act and National Water Act.

The Bethal Regional Court in Secunda found the municipality guilty of causing significant pollution to the environment, interfering with waterworks, pollution of water resources, an act that detrimentally affects a water course, and failure to comply with compliance notices.

This comes after a series of intervention measures undertaken by the department against the municipality since 2019, in line with the Constitution and the Intergovernmental Framework.

Water and Sanitation Director-General, Dr Sean Phillips, said in December 2019 and March 2020, the department issued the municipality with directives to make representations addressing the risk assessment, intervention and potential rehabilitation plan, and to implement all the recommendations in respect of the underlying problem in their area of jurisdiction.



Msukaligwa Municipality found guilty of polluting water resources

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However, the municipality failed to respond and adhere to the conditions of the directives issued to them within the stipulated timeframes.

“In November 2020, the municipality compiled an assessment report and intervention plan with an approved budget for the commencement of a rehabilitation project in the area, however, no rehabilitation was implemented,” Phillips said.

Phillips commended the enforcement team, saying the judgement has asserted the department’s role as a regulator of the water and sanitation sector.

“It has been our resolve to take all transgressors of the National Water Act to task and send a strong message that if people and institutions do not comply, we will not hesitate to act, without fear or favour. We want to strengthen our role as a regulator of the sector in line with all the prescripts,” Phillips said.

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