



MINISTER  
WATER AND SANITATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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BY EMAIL: Nokukhanya.Mkhize@durban.gov.za

Mr Cyril Xaba  
Councillor: eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality Mayor  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Hall  
Dr Pixley KaSeme Street  
**DURBAN**  
4001

Dear Councillor Xaba

**REQUEST FOR CONTINUED DEFERMENT / RELAXATION OF WATER CURTAILMENT REQUIREMENTS**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 30 June 2026 requesting a further deferment of the implementation of water curtailments within the uMngeni Water Supply System. The Department of Water and Sanitation (the Department) has considered the representations made, including the progress reported on Water Conservation and Water Demand Management (WC/WDM) and Non-Revenue Water (NRW) initiatives.

Since July 2023, the Department has granted six concessions and deferments to provide the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality (the Municipality) with an opportunity to reduce water demand and address excessive water losses. Despite these concessions over almost three years, the required reductions have not been achieved, and there is no reasonable basis to conclude that a further deferment would produce a different outcome.

The August 2025 concession was granted on the understanding that the Municipality would achieve demand reductions of approximately 1% per month for 8 months, through an aggressive WC/WDM programme. Through interactions with the Municipality during the monthly Joint Operations Committee (JOC) meetings, the Municipality is not implementing any or very little of its commitments, and as a result, the target has unsurprisingly not been met.



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The Department is furthermore concerned that the Municipality continues to experience shortages of plumbers, vehicles and critical resources, while delays in appointing external plumbing contractors have constrained leak repairs and other NRW interventions. As a result, NRW remains unacceptably high at 55.6%, while unresolved water faults increased from 744 in November 2025 to 14 776 by May 2026, significantly undermining efforts to reduce water losses and demand.

The uMngeni Water Supply System is a strategic regional resource that underpins both water security and economic activity across the region. The abstraction limits contained in uMngeni-uThukela Water's Water Use Licence are based on detailed assessments using , water resource systems planning models, considering all water-user demands within the system. They are supported by ongoing system performance monitoring to ensure the sustainable use of the resource and benefit of all. This decision support system allows for an allocation procedure or operating rule based on a risk-based approach, ensuring that the water supply system does not experience system failure (zero volume in dams) through prioritisation and the supply of water at different levels of reliability to different user groups.

The 2026/27 Annual Operating Analysis confirms that continued operation above licensed volumes will increase the risk of severe restrictions and potential system failure to supply water, with serious consequences for water users and the regional economy. These consequences pose a risk to all stakeholders within the system, threatening a reliable supply to all user groups. It is also anticipated that these risks will be exacerbated by the predicted strong El Niño, which is expected to persist through the end of the 2026/27 summer season. Applying the principle that water use can be restricted, the Department will balance the risk of system failure by introducing curtailments incrementally and equitably to different user groups during periods of short supply and declining dam levels.

The Department, therefore, cannot permit the continued abstraction of water above licensed limits. The Municipality is required to intensify the implementation of all demand management and NRW reduction measures to achieve a sustained reduction in water demand of at least 1% per month over the next 12 months.

The Department will continue to monitor progress of these reductions through the JOC which the Municipality is a member of. Should the required reductions not be achieved and sustained, the Department will have no alternative but to direct uMngeni-uThukela Water to implement supply-side curtailments to restore compliance with licensed abstraction volumes to protect the long-term security of supply for the region.

After three years of concessions and deferments, the Department expects measurable reductions in demand and water losses. The focus must now shift from plans and commitments to implementation and demonstrable results.

Yours sincerely



**MISS PEMMY C.P. MAJODINA, MP**  
**MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION**

DATE: 09/09/2026