

Transmitted by email

12 June 2018

To: Minister of Water and Sanitation, Minister Gugile Nkwinti
Delivered via: Private Secretary to the Minister, Ms Notshe
Email: NotsheN@dws.gov.za
And To: Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation,
Mlungisi Johnson
Email: mjohnson@parliament.gov.za
And to: Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Themba
Godi
Email: ngodi@parliament.gov.za
And to: The President of the Republic of South Africa, President Cyril
Ramaphosa
Email: PresidentRSA@presidency.gov.za ; Robert@presidency.gov.za
Pages: 3

Dear Minister Nkwinti

RE: UMGENI INTERIM WATER BOARD'S LAS VEGAS TRIP

1. The purpose of this letter is to ascertain whether members of the Umgeni Interim Water Board have obtained approval to travel to a conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. If so, we would like to know why this approval was granted, considering the financial challenges in South Africa's water sector.
2. It has recently been brought to our attention that members of the Umgeni Interim Water Board and Executive, as well as members of the Water Research Commission, went to Las Vegas to attend a conference hosted by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) from 11 – 14 June 2018.
3. As I am sure you are aware, former Minister of Water and Sanitation Nomvula Mokoyane, wrote two letters to the Umgeni Water board in 2016 which highlight the

process for obtaining approval from the Minister for international travel and accommodation.

4. In the letter dated 10 July 2016 (**ANNEX A**), the then Minister indicated that the following information should be submitted to support approval:

- 3.1 The purpose of the travel;
- 3.2 The level of contribution to the water sector;
- 3.3 The actual cost incurred for the travel (accommodation, flights, administration and subsistence, etc); and
- 3.4 In the case of sponsored travel, the details of the travel and any cost implications incurred by the Department; and the complete delegation attending and participation of each individual.

5. Further, Minister Mokonyane emphasised that “in light of [...] cost containment measures, it should be noted that the delegated officials authorized for international travel from Umgeni Water should be limited to a reasonable number”.

6. According to the AWWA (**ANNEX B**), the following South African attendees, which included five Umgeni Water Board members were present:

- Thami Hlongwa, acting CE of Umgeni Water
- Sbusiso Madonsela, company secretary, Umgeni Water
- Ziphozethu Mathenjwa, chairperson of the board, Umgeni Water
- Midiavhathu Tshivhase, board member, Umgeni Water
- Monica Malungu, designation not specified, Umgeni Water
- Sizwe Zuma, Insika Foundation
- Bhavna Soni, deputy head of engineering, eThekweni water entity
- Valerie Naidoo, Water Research Commission
- Manjusha Sunil, Water Research Commission

7. Accordingly, we would appreciate it if the Minister could answer the following:

7.1 Was the necessary approval obtained for the Las Vegas trip?

- 7.2 If so, kindly furnish evidence confirming the application and approval.
 - 7.2.1 Kindly provide reasons for such approval in light of the financial issues in the water sector.
 - 7.2.2 Is the delegation a “reasonable number”, if so – how?
 - 7.3 If approval was not obtained, how will members be held accountable other than paying for the cost of travel and accommodation from their own pockets?
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8. Attached further to this letter is a letter from former Minister Mokonyane dated 12 June 2018 titled “Implementation of Austerity Measures for Water Sector Entities Pertaining to National and International Travel and Accommodation” as well as photo evidence of some of the people in Las Vegas.
 9. Kindly respond no later than 22 June 2018.

Yours faithfully



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