



MEDIA STATEMENT

Clarity regarding Regulations on the Procedural Requirement for Water Use Licence Applications

For immediate release

15 June 2023

The Department of Water and Sanitation published the Revision of the Regulations Regarding the Procedural Requirements for Water Use Licence Applications on 19 May 2023. The Regulations were promulgated in terms of Section 26 (1) (k) of the National Water Act, 36 of 1998. The public was invited to submit written comments on the proposed Regulations within a period of 60 days.

Since the publication of the draft Regulations, concerns of various stakeholders have been reported in the media; these concerns relate to the impact of the Regulations on the agricultural and forestry sectors.

Today, the Department met with one of these stakeholders, Agri-SA, to discuss their concerns. The Department clarified that the transformation requirements categories as envisaged in the current review of Regulations are only applicable to applications for new water use licenses and are not applicable to renewal of existing water use licenses, nor to the water use applications which will arise out of compulsory licensing (compulsory licensing refers to the process of re-licensing water use allocations which were made prior to the National Water Act coming into effect). Currently, 98.5% of available water resources in South Africa are already allocated.

The Department clarified that the transformation requirement categories would only apply to water use license applications for the remaining 1.5%. The Department indicated that it would be willing to consider suggestions for amendments to the draft Regulations to clarify this issue and encouraged Agri-SA to make written submissions on the draft Regulations in this regard.

The Department will be meeting other stakeholders in the irrigation and forestry sectors, such as NAFU-SA, AFASA, Forestry SA, as part of the stakeholder engagement process related to the draft Regulations. The window for public comments on the draft Regulations remains open and interested members of the public are encouraged to continue to make submissions.

END

Issued by the Department of Water & Sanitation

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