

08 September 2025

Mr. O. A. Losaba

Municipal Manager
Ngaka Modiri Molema District Municipality
Cnr Carrington & 1st Avenue
Mafikeng
2745

By email: vanrooyenm@nmmdm.gov.za; losabao@nmmdm.gov.za:

Subject: Urgent Attention Required: Water Supply Lichtenburg

Dear Mr. Losaba,

AfriForum is a non-profit organisation with the main purpose of protecting the constitutional rights of its members and the communities to which its members belong. We are acting on behalf of our members in the local community of Lichtenburg, who approached us for assistance as they have been without water for extended periods from 2022 and it still continues into 2025.

We sent a formal letter in January as well as in April but have yet to receive a response. We remain hopeful that we can collaborate to address the challenges facing both the District and the Municipality. However, we respectfully request that the District engage in an open dialogue with us. We have already developed a solution for the challenges at Klipveld, which supplies water to Lichtenburg.

As you know, access to water is a constitutional right. This is why we would like to kindly remind the municipality of a few key regulations that underscore the importance of immediate action:

1. Constitution of South Africa (1996), Section 27(1)(b) – Every person has the right to access water.
2. Basic Water Supply Standard – As published in the Government Gazette (2002), each person is entitled to at least 25 liters of potable water per day, delivered at a minimum flow rate of 10 liters per minute and the water should be usable for human consumption.
3. Government Notice R509, Government Gazette 22355 – Water services must not be interrupted for more than 24 hours without providing alternative access to at least 10 liters of potable water per person, per day.

Background and Current Crisis

Since 2022, the residents of Lichtenburg—particularly in low-lying and impoverished areas—have endured increasingly dire water service delivery failures. Initially, water was provided only briefly in the early morning and evening; today, outages lasting weeks are common, and in some cases residents have received no water for years.

Residents in nearby Extension 3, Coligny, have reportedly been without any municipal water supply for three years, being forced to walk long distances or pay for basic buckets of water

June 2024

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Member Affairs – Email: ledesake@afriforum.co.za • **Directors:** Ms A. Bailey, Mr P.J.W. Buys, Dr H.K. Coetzee, Mr P.L. Dekker, Mr F.J.D. de Klerk, Mr G.R. de Vries, Dr D.J. Hermann, Mr W.G. Human, Mr C.M. Kriel and Dr R. Pretorius. • **Company Secretary:** Mr W.A. Vogel.

Registration number: 2005/042861/08 • **NGO number:** 054 - 590

administered by private individuals. Meanwhile, in Lichtenburg itself, water is switched on around 07:00 and cut off by 11:00, with many households going completely without. Surveys from over 2,000 respondents indicate that approximately 85% of residents may not receive water on any given day.

In response to the crisis, Mayor Khumalo Molefe of the Ngaka Modiri Molema District has stated that infrastructure damaged by lightning is the cause, and that 15 out of 17 boreholes have since been restored in areas including the CBD, Boikhutso, and Blydeville. However, these fixes are insufficient against the scale of the problem.

Impact

This sustained erosion of water services has severely compromised hygiene, health, and dignity—particularly among the elderly, infirm, and economically vulnerable. The collapse of water availability has had knock-on effects in schools, healthcare facilities, and businesses. Many residents rely on costly tanker water, boreholes, or private suppliers to survive.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

Multiple assessments have placed the Ditsobotla Local Municipality (which includes Lichtenburg) in the most critical category for water service delivery. Non-revenue water losses are estimated at about 47.4%, largely due to leaks, theft, mismanagement, and insufficient infrastructure investment. Moreover, a court order (brought by Sakeliga) mandates monthly progress reports to ensure reliable potable water supply to the district.

Requests for Urgent Action

Given the prolonged nature of this crisis (now persisting into 2025), we urgently request the following:

1. Clarify the exact nature of the issues — including infrastructure breakdown, vandalism, power issues, and volume-to-demand shortfalls.
2. Explain repair delays — whether they are due to funding constraints, administrative delays, supply chain issues, or other systemic failures.
3. Provide a realistic, updated timeline – indicating short-term (days/weeks) and medium-term (months) milestones for full restoration.
4. Submit a comprehensive action plan, including:
 - Emergency water distribution points (tanker routes, fixed points, community stands)
 - Scheduled borehole repairs and maintenance
 - Leak detection and repair schedule
 - Power and pump maintenance
 - Budget allocations and funding sources
5. Provide contact details of responsible officials — for follow-up, community liaison, and accountability.
6. Convene meeting with AfriForum— AfriForum understands the challenges the District has to face and we do have a solution that would benefit both the District and the Community.

We requested this information by 15th of September, 2025. We are confident that with your leadership and the District's commitment, we can reach a swift resolution to ensure the residents of Lichtenburg no longer suffer the consequences of this prolonged disruption.

If we do not receive a response, we will be forced to escalate this matter but we believe that AfriForum and the District can resolve these challenges before we have to escalate this matter.

Sincerely,

Armand Viljoen

District Coordinator: Marico

AfriForum

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