

To: The Mayor
eThekweni Local Municipality
Cllr Mxolisi Kaunda
c/o Vuyiswa Hadebe
Per: E-mail
vuyiswahadebe@icloud.com)

15 March 2023

CC: Head of Department, Water and Sanitation
eThekweni Local Municipality
Ednick Msweli
Per: E-mail (ednick.msweli@durban.gov.za)

And to: The Municipal Manager
eThekweni Local Municipality
Mr Musa Mbhele
Per: E-mail
(metroceo@durban.gov.za)

Dear All,

URGENT INTERVENTION REQUIRED ON THE UMBILO RIVER

OUR REF: WC/AAR/01

Dear Mayor Kaunda,

WaterCAN, an initiative of the Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA), and Durban-based non-profit organisation Adopt-a-River have conducted a series of water tests along the Umbilo River over a period of six weeks and the results are extremely concerning.

The testing campaign conducted E.coli tests both below and above the Umbilo River Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW) which is located near Pinetown. The collected samples were tested by Pietermaritzburg-based Talbot Laboratories.

The test results were as follows (E.coli count/100ml):

	2 February 2023	15 February 2023	3 March 2023
Above Umbilo WWTW	5810/100	686700/100	129970/100
Below Umbilo WWTW	61310/100	30760/100	8690/100

E.coli levels above 400/100ml are considered to be “critical” and dangerous to human health.

WaterCAN and Adopt-A-River have financed and conducted these tests as a public duty.

We are asking the city to take this set of results very seriously and undertake the following action items.

- Inspect, repair, upgrade and maintain the Umbilo River WWTW.

- Publicise a schedule/timeline as to when the Umbilo River WWTW will be repaired, upgraded and maintained.
- Investigate, identify and repair broken sewerage lines that are overflowing into the river both upstream and downstream of the Umbilo River WWTW.
- Investigate, identify and criminally charge, issue fines and demand corrective action by any business, establishment or private household that is illegally discharging chemical and/or bacterial waste into the Umbilo River.

WaterCAN and Adopt-A-River will resume testing 60 days from the date of this letter as part of a public duty, civic oversight and in the interests of keeping the city, its political leaders and officials accountable.

eThekweni is the jewel of the province, and its success has a direct impact on the success of every single village and town across the region.

At your inauguration you said, “we must turn this city around” and that you have a “task to restore the image of the city to its glory days”. You stated you would not tolerate “non-compliance” and a “disregard of laws that govern the city”.

If this is still your position then we urge you to accept our test results and task the relative officials to act with haste.

Regards,

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