

Dusty streets in neglected Morgenzon pose health risk to residents

MORGENZON - Heavy duty trucks passing through residential areas of rural Morgenzon in Mpumalanga, has made the area's air seriously polluted in such a way that many residents have complained of coughing and breathing problems.

Residents of this small town have complained to the Democratic Alliance (DA) that the ANC-led Lekwa Local Municipality has neglected them and the infrastructure in the small town. This has led to a number of health related problems.

The town's air is thick with dust due to dusty roads and coal-trucks that pass through residential areas to the near-by Majuba Power Station. According to residents, the trucks previously used the dangerously pothole littered R30, R35 and R39 roads; but now they decided to (illegally) use residential roads that are dusty themselves. This has directly exposed the residents to air and dust pollution, causing health hazards.

Another concern to the residents is that there are no traffic officers allocated to monitor the trucks and any other heavy duty vehicles that use residential roads. The DA has reported this matter to Lekwa Local

Municipality on many occasions; but nothing has been done to help the residents.

If the municipality is currently not in a position to address the problem; the DA would suggest that they must at least spray the streets with water every morning to minimise the dust pollution which might cause diseases like asthma, nasal allergy, bronchitis, and many other respiratory diseases.

As required by the National Environmental Management air quality act 39 of 2004; it is the duty of the municipality (government) to protect residents to high levels of air pollution that might expose them to health hazards. Seeing that the municipality has ignored the DA's complaint about this matter, we will approach the provincial MEC of Public Works, Roads and Transport, Gillion Mashego, to urgently intervene and help the people of Morgenzon.

Should the MEC fail to help, the DA will have no choice but to go to the Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) as this is a matter of Constitutional Rights violation. *(Media statement by Cllr Muso Kubheka, DA District Councillor- Lekwa Local Municipality) JD*

