

Pollution disaster looms

THE POWERFUL editorial, backed by Dov Fedler's equally powerful cartoon, in The Star of July 16 refers.

I am the convenor of the Gauteng water caucus and our meetings cover the problems encountered daily with water management.

I can safely report that the Crocodile and Vaal river systems are heavily polluted from sewage, industrial, mining and agricultural effluents.

The thought of an additional load of saline-affected water from partially treated acid mine drainage water scares me.

No polluters are being held to account, although these include ArcelorMittal, Sasol and the mines.

As result, we are facing growing health problems, high levels of infant mortality and a substantial loss of agricultural land. The lack of infrastructure management, not only in

our sewerage works, but also in the sewer and freshwater pipes, means that groundwater is being polluted by sewer bursts and potable water is being lost via pipe bursts.

Communities are highly affected by air, land and water pollution. The food they grow is rendered toxic from these pollution sources.

In some communities, pools of sewage stand in open areas unremediated.

Gauteng has a situation of near disaster proportions on its hands. The province is the point source of SA's pollution and nothing (or very little) is being done to remedy this.

Remediation could provide jobs. Holding the polluters accountable and fining them will provide the finance. All we require is the will to make it happen. The legislation exists.

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