

# GroundWork approaches court over IRP

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Environmental organisation GroundWork has launched new court proceedings against Mineral Resources and Energy Minister **Gwede Mantashe** and the National Energy Regulator of South Africa (Nersa).

GroundWork stresses that decisions about South Africa's energy future must be made in a transparent and accountable manner, which forms the basis of its litigation.

The organisation is asking the North Gauteng High Court to order the Minister and Nersa to provide reasons for various decisions related to the 2019 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP).

GroundWork has sought written reasons for the IRP from both the Minister and Nersa – which they are legally required to provide – since November 2019.

“The Minister and Nersa's failure to provide reasons has forced GroundWork to institute litigation to obtain the answers,” the organisation states.

As South Africa's electricity plan for the next ten years, the 2019 IRP – if implemented in its current form – has far-reaching social, economic and climate impacts.

“The decision to include new coal, despite this not being part of a least-cost IRP, has severely negative implications for our health and wellbeing, our climate, our air and water resources, and electricity prices.

“These kinds of decisions affect everyone and cannot be made behind closed doors, with no explanation of the rationale, justifications or assumptions relied on. There must be full transparency and accountability for all of South Africa's electricity decision-making,” says GroundWork representative **Robby Mokgalaka**.

The long-overdue updated IRP, published in October 2019, provides for 1 500 MW of new coal capacity and 3 000 MW of new fossil gas capacity in South Africa's electricity future.

GroundWork in a press release says data published by international climate science and policy institute Climate Analytics confirms that global coal use in electricity generation would have to decrease by 80% below 2010 levels in less than ten years (by 2030) to meet the targets set out in the Paris Agreement.

This was echoed by the urgent appeal by United Nations secretary general **António Guterres** earlier this month for no new coal plants to be built anywhere in the world, particularly given the need for climate-resilient, healthy Covid-19 recovery plans worldwide.

GroundWork further states that a significant proportion of fossil fuel energy generation planned for in the 2019 IRP will lock South Africa into expensive, obsolete infrastructure, which the country simply cannot afford – now, or in the future.

South Africa is already ill-prepared for a transition from fossil fuels, and faces some R2-trillion, or \$125-billion, in transition risks, as a result of locking South Africa into fossil fuel infrastructure that will not yield the expected income or value owing to major shifts in climate policy and market transformations, GroundWork states.

Now, more than ever, South Africa needs to avoid spending on unnecessary infrastructure that is not in the public interest, says Mokgalaka.

The Minister and Nersa have been given until August 18 to oppose the High Court application. 🚩

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