

Enviro dept invites public comment on sulphur dioxide emissions amendment



Photo by Bloomberg

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The [Environmental](#) Affairs Minister has temporarily withdrawn a provision that would have allowed for a doubling in the amount of harmful pollutant sulphur dioxide companies may emit.

This follows [environmental](#) organisation GroundWork's litigation, instituted last month, seeking to have the provision set aside.

The doubling had been published for implementation on October 31, 2018, without inviting public comment on it as the Air Quality Act requires, GroundWork said in a release published on Thursday.

The Minister has now published a second notice, inviting the public to comment on the same proposed amendment to the minimum emission standards, which will allow [coal](#)-fired boilers to emit double their previously allowed sulphur dioxide pollution from April 2020.

The public comment period will close on June 21.

The Department of [Environmental](#) Affairs stated in a separate release that the intention of the amendment is to provide for existing plants to comply with a sulphur dioxide minimum emissions limit of 1 000 mg/Nm³ instead of 500 mg/Nm³.

This means that existing plants would have to reduce their emissions from the current standard of 3 500 mg/Nm³ to 1 000 mg/Nm³.

“While we are relieved that the Minister has finally withdrawn the illegal provision to double sulphur dioxide pollution, GroundWork and other community organisations will not only continue to oppose this proposed doubling, but will fight all efforts to weaken our already poor pollution standards,” said GroundWork director **Bobby Peek**.

The Centre for [Environmental](#) Rights’ Pollution and Climate Change programme head **Robyn Hugo** pointed out that South African law should be following the global trend of reducing pollution from [industrial](#) facilities as a matter of urgency, but instead are demonstrating less commitment to clean air and human [health](#) than other developing countries. 

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<https://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/mokonyane-invites-public-comment-on-sulphur-dioxide-emissions-amendment-2019-05-23>