

MEDIA STATEMENT

ATTENTION: EDITORS/REPORTERS

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PREMIER NTULI POSITIONS RICHARDS BAY AS STRATEGIC ENERGY HUB FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Premier of KwaZulu-Natal, Honourable Thamsanqa Ntuli, has called for stronger collaboration between government, industry, and investors to accelerate energy investment and industrial development in the province. The Premier was delivering keynote remarks at the inaugural KwaZulu-Natal Energy Indaba held in Richards Bay.

Premier Ntuli emphasised that reliable and affordable energy is fundamental to economic growth, industrial expansion, and job creation. He noted that energy security will be central to the province's long-term development agenda, particularly as government advances the KwaZulu-Natal Secondary Cities Programme aimed at building new economic growth centres across the province.

The Premier highlighted Richards Bay as a strategic industrial and logistics hub capable of playing a major role in strengthening South Africa's energy security. Through the Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ), the province is positioning itself to attract large-scale investment in emerging energy sectors including gas-to-power, renewable energy manufacturing, green hydrogen, and energy storage technologies.

According to the Premier, energy projects currently represent more than 77% of the RBIDZ investment pipeline, amounting to approximately R123 billion of the R140 billion total investment pipeline. He also welcomed progress on the proposed 3000 MW gas-to-power development project in Richards Bay, which is expected to contribute significantly to stabilising electricity supply in KwaZulu-Natal and nationally.

Premier Ntuli further stressed that the development of the energy economy must be accompanied by strong investment in skills development. The provincial government is strengthening partnerships between universities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, and industry to prepare young people for future jobs in emerging sectors such as hydrogen technologies, renewable energy systems, and advanced manufacturing.

The Premier also reaffirmed government's commitment to South Africa's Just Energy Transition, emphasising that the transition toward cleaner energy must protect industrial competitiveness, safeguard energy security, and create new economic opportunities for workers and young people.

He concluded by calling on investors, industry leaders, and development partners to work together with government to unlock the province's energy potential and build a resilient and sustainable energy system that supports long-term economic growth.

Premier Ntuli described the Energy Indaba as an important platform to mobilise investment, strengthen partnerships, and position KwaZulu-Natal as a leading energy hub in Africa.

Meanwhile, the MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Rev. Musa Zondi, reaffirmed that through this energy agenda government will ensure that issues of availability, accessibility, affordability, and sustainability are addressed while decisively tackling poverty and inequality.

“Energy is not simply an input into production; it is the backbone of manufacturing, logistics, value-addition industries, and every component of our modern economy. For communities, access to energy unlocks dignity, safety, education, health, and entrepreneurship,” said MEC Rev Zondi.

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