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News

Santa Marta loses opportunity to access \$19,000 million to improve the aqueduct system: Essmar

June 30, 2023

For its part, the District Mayor's Office of Santa Marta spoke out and issued a statement, stating that the projects presented by Essmar do not require authorization from the district.

The Public Services Company of the District of Santa Marta, Essmar ESP, issued a statement to public opinion a few hours ago, stating that Santa Marta loses the opportunity to access \$19,000 million to improve the aqueduct system.

According to the letter with the purpose of managing resources to improve the current conditions of the aqueduct infrastructure, the equipment of Essmar, with the advice of EPM structured two important projects for the rehabilitation, modernization and optimization of 12 underground wells for water supply in the District of Santa Marta in order to contribute to the mitigation of the historical water deficit of the city.

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"These projects were presented to the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, and after their analysis, both initiatives received the technical feasibility of this entity, thus allowing the formalization of an agreement between this Ministry, the District of Santa Marta and Findeter, for the allocation of 19,000 million pesos that would allow adding up to 120 liters per second to the availability of water from the District and incorporate 5 additional wells to those that currently operate" quotes the statement.

According to Essmar, the optimization of 12 underground wells would generate a water supply in the District of Santa Marta.

Similarly, it points out that "the objective of the District endorsing the request for these resources before the Ministry of Housing, City and Territory, from May 30, 2023, for which reason the Essmar team presented this initiative to the chief of the Office of Risk Management and Infrastructure Manager of the Santa Marta Mayor's Office, and on June 22, he socialized directly with Mayor Virna Johnson. In addition, different efforts have been made to advance in this purpose; However, the Mayor's Office did not provide all the documents to give its endorsement, which were essential for the signing of the inter-administrative agreement and the disbursement of the resources that would benefit the community of Santa Marta".

On the other hand, This June 29 begins the Law of Guarantees in the country, it is no longer possible to access these 19,000 billion pesos to continue strengthening the aqueduct infrastructure and increase the availability of water for the Samaria community".

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"Essmar remains firm in its purpose of improving the water supply in Santa Marta and is convinced that the best route is an articulated work with the different actors in the territory to add and contribute to the well-being of the samariums. The Company is clear that these two projects do not represent a definitive solution to the water deficit in Santa Marta, but considers that it is an opportunity that should not be missed, since the management of Essmar and EPM would allow the addition of 19,000 million pesos and 120 liters of water per second to the quality of life of the Samaria community. The District of Santa Marta deserves that all the actors join wills and conviction to contribute to the provision of water for the inhabitants of the city who need it so much" the statement ends.

The Mayor's Office of Santa Marta responds to the statements of the Essmar

After the version issued by Essmar, the Mayor's Office of Santa Marta pronounced itself through a statement to the public opinion, where he affirms that the projects presented by Essmar do not require authorization from the district.

According to the statement, the management of the intervened entity tried to link the District in a procedure where the source of financing was already defined through an agreement between the Nation and Findeter.

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"On June 22, it was learned that Essmar - ESP, today intervened by the Superintendence of Public Services, presented projects to the Ministry of Housing to enable 11 wells for a value of \$19,000 million, whose execution would take place through an Inter-administrative Agreement between the Nation and Findeteran agreement that does not require authorization from the district to be signed," the communication indicates.

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It also specifies that the **Conpes document** through which the government of the president **Iván Duque** decided on the intervention of Essmar brought with it the suspension in its functions and powers to the Board of Directors of the company, chaired by the **district mayor of Santa Marta**; Consequently, since the materialization of said intervention, all actions of the district administration ceased in relation to the decisions adopted for the management of the company, which is why there is no responsibility whatsoever for the **mayor's office in the failure of said Agreement**.

"We must remember that for the last 12 years we have been demanding the solidarity participation of the Nation in the definitive solution to the shortage of water in the city. It seems that, on this occasion, the only interest of the **Ministry of Housing was to link the District to show that they do contribute to this crisis** with a much lower sum than the one we have been insisting on for a new aqueduct and with which they propose **rehabilitate 11 wells in a project that has a duration of approximately 12 months** and that it does not provide the **flow that the city requires**" notes a part of the letter.

In the same way, it specifies that "on this road we have had to travel alone and that is why the Mayor's Office of Santa Marta and the Governor's Office of Magdalena, negotiated with Cenit (a subsidiary of **Ecopetrol**) the financing of the collection system designs based on the **rivers of the north, Guachaca and Buritaca** from where they will be taken **2,400 liters per second to guarantee a continuous and quality service for the next 25 years**. This solution costs \$1.6 billion and would be executed with own resources".

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Before the Essmar intervention, significant improvements were achieved: the South-North aqueduct systems were interconnected, through the Lucha – Sena – Troncal work; optimized and expanded **PTAP El Roble and Mamatoco**; The underground water wells were increased from 14 to 54 and the aqueduct and sewage networks have been improved through the different works carried out by the District.

Due to the lack of investment of the intervened Essmar, **the Mayor's Office has invested \$54,063 million** in the replacement and expansion of the city's aqueduct and sewage networks. **We have also transferred \$9,412 million to banks** to comply with the commitments of the loans acquired from Essmar, plus \$7,916 million consigned to cover the subsidies.

For her part, the **Government of Magdalena has allocated \$7,663 million for the aqueduct and sewerage works** in the 11 de Noviembre, Cristo Rey and Bello Horizonte neighborhoods. The Governments of Change alone have sought real alternatives to this problem.

The Mayor's Office and the Governor's Office will continue to focus on finding a definitive solution to the shortage of water in the District, and will continue to take the necessary actions until this objective is achieved.

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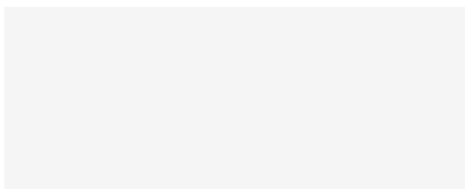
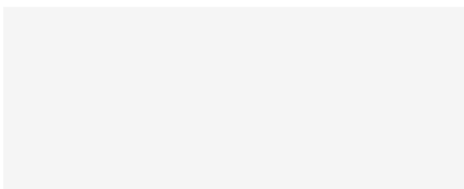
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