

Committee Passes Merafong Legislation

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Draft legislation aimed at reincorporating Merafong municipality into Gauteng province was approved at a joint sitting of two parliamentary committees on Thursday.

The Constitution 16th Amendment Bill, along with a related piece of draft legislation, the Cross Boundary Municipalities Laws Repeal and Related Matters Amendment Bill, is now set to go to the National Council of Provinces for debate on March 19.

"The bill is now passed by us," the co-chairman of Parliament's security and constitutional affairs and local government and administration select committees, Kgoshi Mokoena, told members, after receiving the mandate of all provinces.

If approved by the NCOP next week, the two measures will end years of unhappiness over a decision -- taken in 2005 -- to redraft borders and place Merafong in North West province.

Residents of Merafong, which includes Khutsong township, have in the past taken to the streets in sometimes violent protest, complaining their standard of living would plummet as the North West government was less efficient in service delivery than the Gauteng government.

The protest led to government announcing last year that it would reverse its 2005 decision.

The two pieces of draft legislation were adopted by the National Assembly last month.

The Constitution Sixteenth Amendment Bill aims to amend the Constitution in order to re-determine the geographical areas of the provinces of Gauteng and North West. Thus it intends to give effect to the decision to reincorporate the Merafong City Local Municipality into Gauteng.

The Cross Boundary Municipalities Laws Repeal and Related Matters Amendment Bill seeks to amend the Cross Boundary Repeal Act so as to provide for the re-demarcation of the boundaries of the Dr Kenneth Kaunda and West Rand District municipalities.

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