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**Sent:** 27 April 2023 19:40  
**To:** Ofwat governance team  
**Cc:** 'Laura Farris MP'  
**Subject:** Shocking UK Water Management

Dear Sirs

**RE: Water Pollution and Water Company abuse of sewage Licences.**

I understand you are carrying out a review of public opinion on what I see as a blatant and ongoing failure by many UK water companies to invest in and manage their water & sewage processing effectively. The situation (as we can all now clearly see) has resulted in extraordinary and unbelievable records and evidence covering tens of thousands of events of dumping of waste water and untreated sewage into our coastal regions and waterway- throughout the country.

The record low quality standard in waterways, rivers, lakes and beaches in the UK is a disgrace and OFWAT need to be seen to act to reverse this terrible situation.

Like every MP that has in recent years voted in support of (in effect) raw sewage dumping and the purposeful lowering water quality; NOT ACTING TO STOP THIS can only be judged as 'guilty by association' in any breaches eventually highlighted and secured by existing laws.

I have referred to the current law (**Ref 1**) and feel it necessary to write to your committee with my formal complaint and rising personal anger over the shockingly poor conduct of Water Companies and what I see as a contributory 'compliance' abuse of UK legislation....which is there to **maintain core standards of service and conduct in our now privately owned water system.**

The weak use of existing legislation and control is allowing private companies to avoid running costs, long term investment and the repair and expensive maintenance work expected to be covered by Water bills .....**by simply redirecting foul water** which obviously should be processed as part of the sewage undertakers' service- directly or indirectly straight into the nearest rivers, lakes and seas.

The law is strong enough if applied properly; yet it is not being used in the way it should be...is it? Even a basic review of the recent thousands of cases of weather-based 'spills' one can see that the legislation /law applicable today over the conduct and practises expected of any water company-*specifically over their use of licence control of 'occasional or extreme circumstances' releases* - is at best being ignored or worse.....being purposely bent to the sole benefit and advantage of the Y/E profits made by privately owned Water Companies!

Shareholder dividends and healthy salaries reflect a clear and obvious strategy to avoid high processing costs by dumping not treating sewage...and that 'shit-solution' is now a common practice seen in most if not all water companies.

Some are now calling this Brexshit!

The jaw- dropping, inappropriately low fines being applied against admitted or found 'breaches' are insulting and are treated with contempt by the accountants - simply recorded as small entries on the far wider, highly profitable spreadsheets of Management Accounts of these seemingly untouchable Water Company Tsars!

The fair and reasonable rights and let's be honest 'expectations' of the public and *protection of consumer interests* is not just about water bills; it is to have a modern effective 'water & sewage service'. That expectation (backed by DEFRA and the UK and EU environmental standard agencies) includes the management of water and sewage services....end to end. It does not allow, suggest or accept the loss of or intestinal contamination of our existing clean, unpolluted water in our rivers and our beaches.

**In your assessment of what to do...I suggest you consider this:**

- 1) Enforce existing laws to stop abuse of water & sewage /waste dumping.
- 2) Immediately cancel all licences to dump UNTREATED sewage into public waterways.
- 3) Set up and the public to monitor local waterway and simply record any /all abuse online so records are made on illegal spills.
- 4) Treat breaches of Water & Sewage laws in the same way as Health & Safety (HSE) and make the penalty fines at least match the entire cost of cleaning up any spill and also fine boards of directors/ CEOs (and legally charge them) with the full force of the law.
- 5) Imprison repeated offenders that own/manage failed Water Companies.
- 6) Take back into Public Ownership any Water Company that fails three times in any year to meet /apply agreed standards.
- 7) Ask the treasury to apply a windfall 'Foul Water Tax' to 2022/2023 profits in Water Companies and route that cash to help clean up rivers and beaches.

The rights of public use and enjoyment of quality of our waterways (as DEFRA have outlined to the public in 2020/) ....seems to have been entirely forgotten?

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plan-to-reduce-water-pollution>

Not only have public interests been ignored they have been left out of the policies this government has applied over years of inactivity.

This in 2023...still no real action to stop making water worse!

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plan-for-cleaner-and-more-plentiful-water>

**Ref 1.**

**Water Industry Act 1991 (section 2 / updated 2023) extracts**

2. (2A)The Secretary of State or, as the case may be, the Authority shall exercise and perform the powers and duties mentioned in subsection (1) above in the manner which he or it considers is best calculated—

(a)to further the consumer objective;

(b)to secure that the functions of a water undertaker and of a sewerage undertaker are properly carried out as respects every area of England and Wales;

(c)to secure that companies holding appointments under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of this Act as relevant undertakers are able (in particular, by securing reasonable returns on their capital) to finance the proper carrying out of those functions; F3...

(d)to secure that the activities authorised by the licence [F4of a water supply licensee or sewerage licensee] and any statutory functions imposed on it in consequence of the licence are properly carried out[F5; and

(e)to further the resilience objective.]

(2B)The consumer objective mentioned in subsection (2A)(a) above is to protect the interests of consumers, wherever appropriate by promoting effective competition between persons engaged in, or in commercial activities connected with, the provision of water and sewerage services.

(5A)In this section—

- “consumers” includes both existing and future consumers; and
- “the interests of consumers” means the interests of consumers in relation to—

(a) the supply of water by means of a water undertaker's supply system to premises either by water undertakers or by [F16water supply licensees] acting in their capacity as such; and

(b) the provision of sewerage services [F17either by sewerage undertakers or by sewerage licensees acting in their capacity as such.]]

**How did we get to this low point??**

OFWAT is there to guide, monitor and manage water services for the public and to apply the obligations and rules of the Water Industry Act.

**Part of your duty is to:**

- ensure that consumers' interests are protected in relation to any unregulated activities of water companies
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

So PLEASE will you rethink what is going on all around the country (under your control and within your authority) and deliver on your stated clear strategy:

*"providing the very best service for customers, improving the environment and improving life through water, both now and in the future – and the role we will play in achieving it".*

Thank you for your time.

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