

Dear Colleague from Robbie Moore regarding the Storm Overflow Action Plan

Please find enclosed below the Dear Colleague that I have received from Robbie Moore concerning the Storm Overflow Action Plan:

12th March 2024

Dear Colleague,

I am writing to inform you of the publication of a storm overflow action plan dashboard which has been published by industry body WaterUK this morning. As part of our drive to improve transparency, we demanded these storm overflow action plans were created by industry and we will now closely scrutinise them to ensure significant action is taken to reduce harmful and unnecessary discharges.

Profit must never come at the price of pollution, and this Government is taking tough action on water companies not delivering on their civic and legal duties towards the environment and its customers. Yesterday, we confirmed that water companies will invest an additional £180m over the next 12 months to prevent more than 8,000 sewage spills polluting English waterways, following the Secretary of State directing water and sewage companies last December to measurably reduce sewage spills over the next year.

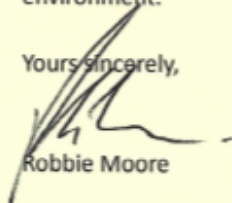
And last month we announced that water bosses are set to be banned from receiving bonuses if a company has committed serious criminal breaches. This is alongside a fourfold increase in water company inspections also announced last month. The new enforcement and inspection regime will see up to 500 additional staff over the next three years and an increase in unannounced inspections to reduce reliance on water company self-monitoring introduced under Labour in 2009.

We have also driven up sewage overflow monitoring from just 7% under Labour in 2010 to 100% by the end of 2023, giving us the tools we need to hold water companies to account. However, it is clear that companies across the country are not going far or fast enough when it comes to addressing the unacceptable volumes of sewerage entering our waterways. The plans published today are a clear demonstration of this, and I want to assure you that the Secretary of State and myself will be making that clear to companies as we evaluate these proposals over the coming weeks.

Attached to this letter is a briefing pack including a template letter which I would encourage you to address to your water company CEO, should you be minded to do so, urging them to go further and faster when it comes to investment in storm overflows and reducing pollution.

In the meantime, I will continue to hold companies accountable for their appalling records on the environment.

Yours sincerely,



Robbie Moore