



Leader of the Council

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Rt Hon George Eustice MP
Secretary of State for
Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

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Dear Secretary of State

Water Quality in Buckinghamshire

Buckinghamshire Council and the residents of Buckinghamshire have been very concerned for some time about the issue of raw sewage being discharged by water companies into the watercourses within Buckinghamshire. The recent discussion over the measures within the Environment Bill between the House of Lords and Commons has highlighted the high level of concern on this issue. The issue causes impacts within the rivers and tributaries within the Thames catchment and of particular concern is the impact on the highly sensitive chalk streams within South Buckinghamshire and the Chilterns. Recognising that our precious chalk streams are an internationally rare habitat it is very concerning to note that none of Buckinghamshire's chalk streams reach good status under the Water Framework Directive in relation to water quality or ecology.

As a Council we want to do everything we can to maintain the water quality and ecology contained within those areas alongside protecting public health. Recently at a Full Council meeting of Buckinghamshire Council a notice of Motion was passed in relation to this issue. The agreed notice of motion noted that Government voted for more moderate measures in the Environment Bill than those proposed by the House of Lords which would have restricted the discharge of raw sewage into our water courses and place a legal duty on water companies to invest in the necessary infrastructure to protect and improve our waterways. The motion agreed that I should write to yourself as Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to all Buckinghamshire Members of Parliament, making known the strong concerns of this Council and emphasising the importance of the Government bringing forward a clear strategy for ceasing this environmentally damaging practice as a matter of priority.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter I look forward to your response in relation to the above.

Yours sincerely

Martin Tett
Leader, Buckinghamshire Council