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By e-mail

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Dear Secretary of State,

With the general election now only a few weeks away, we wanted to write and alert you to the very serious concerns expressed by the organisations and MPs who have signed the attached letter pressing for a commitment from all parties to deliver the long promised reform of our current abstraction regime and action to address the most pressing issue affecting the quality of our watercourses: pollution from agriculture and forestry.

Abstraction reform was first promised in the Water White Paper in 2011, but was excluded from the Water Bill enacted in the last parliament. We received a promise of early legislation following the 2015 election but the Water Minister Therese Coffey has indicated to us that it will not be until the 'early 2020s'.

Groundwater levels in parts of the country indicating the real possibility of a drought this year, following a severe water shortage in 2011/12. The Thames catchment had had only 2mm of rain in April up to the 17<sup>th</sup>, which was just 4% of the long term average for the month, and there has been very little since then.

With the challenges of climate change and the government's commitment to building a million new homes without any clear indication of where the water resources are to come from, there is an urgent need for our politicians to pay greater attention to delivering an abstraction regime that is fit for purpose in this context. Small businesses also need less uncertainty about whether or not they will be able to rely on water being available.

Please visit [www.blueprintforwater.org.uk](http://www.blueprintforwater.org.uk) for a more detailed analysis of these increasingly important issues and I hope that you will commit to the implementation of abstraction reform as a matter of urgency for the new government in June.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Lloyd  
Chief Executive