



Press Release

25 October 2021

Disappointment as MPs reject new rules to reduce sewage pollution

25th October 2021

ACTION FOR THE RIVER KENNET STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE REJECTION OF DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 80 OF THE ENVIRONMENT BILL

Last week, the [amendment](#) approved by the House of Lords to place a legal duty on water companies to reduce the harm caused by storm overflows, was stripped out of the Environment Bill following a tight Commons vote, 268 to 204. This happened in spite of [widespread public support for the amendment](#). 22 backbench conservative MPs voted in support of the environment, including 9 former ministers and 6 current select committee chairs (notable backers include Environment Audit Committee chair Phillip Dunne MP, Father of the House Sir Peter Bottomley and Liaison Committee Chair Sir Bernard Jenkin). Laura Farris and Danny Kruger, MPs for the Kennet Catchment both voted against the proposal. We have contacted them to express our disappointment and allow them to comment.

ARK and many other eNGOs are extremely disappointed by this result, as the government's current plans, such as Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans (DWMPs), to address the issue do not compel water companies to take immediate action to tackle sewage pollution, meaning the state of our rivers could continue to decline indefinitely.

DWMPs do not explicitly require the improvement of sewage infrastructure, nor do they require a reduction in the harm caused by sewage pollution. DWMP's are also temporary. Whilst the current Ministers and Water Companies have the shared goal of eliminating the harm caused by storm overflows, there is nothing to say future incumbents will have the



same view. Placing this duty on the face of the Environment Bill through this amendment will put it beyond legal doubt that it is responsibility of all stakeholders to tackle sewage pollution.

We are hopeful that the amendment will once again receive support from the House of Lords this week, and we urge all MPs to vote in its favour if it returns to the House of Commons.

Alongside other eNGOs, we strongly encourage members to contact their local MP and ask for their commitment to protecting rivers from the scourge of sewage pollution, using the Rivers Trust [automated emailing tool](#).

ENDS

Notes to Editor

Action for the River Kennet is a charity dedicated to protecting and improving the rivers in the Kennet catchment.

The Rivers Trust are conservation experts with a wealth of data and expertise at our fingertips. Through our network of over 63 local Trusts in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and with over 350 dedicated specialists including over 60 farm advisers giving confidential expert advice, we work in partnership at a catchment scale to make our shared vision of wild, healthy, natural rivers, valued by all a reality.

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