



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
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4 June 2025

Re: Invitation to meet with resident about Thames Water's sewage recycling proposals

We were delighted to hear, on Nick Ferrari's programme on LBC yesterday, your confirmation to local resident and campaigner Ian McNuff that you would be willing to visit Teddington with him to discuss Thames Water's highly controversial sewage recycling proposals, providing your diary permits.

We were further pleased to hear you reiterate this in Parliament later that afternoon, during the debate on Thames Water's dire financial state.

You may recall that we wrote to you, shortly after you were named Environment Secretary in July 2024, to outline why the Teddington Direct River Abstraction proposals are so controversial, and to ask the Government to scrap them once and for all.

Thames Water contends that the TDRA is "necessary" for drought resilience reasons. However, we contend that Thames Water has so far failed to make the case that the Teddington proposal is the *right* proposal to achieve this objective. This is particularly true given that more viable alternative proposals are available; that the environmental, construction and social impacts have yet to be fully assessed; and that Thames Water's contention that the TDRA represents the "best value" option has yet to be proven.

This is not to mention the issue of trust. Trust in water companies was already at rock bottom, and recent revelations about Thames Water's financial state have put these concerns into even sharper relief.

Thames Water is completely unable to guarantee financial security, as shown by KKR's decision to abandon its offer despite interventions from Downing Street, whilst our constituents are literally paying the price for Thames Water's mismanagement through rising bills. At the same time, Thames Water is intent on pursuing a scheme, at the cost of hundreds of millions of pounds, which will - at best - be used every two years (if the company survives long enough to see it through). This is yet another example of Thames Water failing to invest in the essentials whilst pouring millions of pounds of bill payers' money into short-term fixes that do nothing but produce new assets for the company to borrow against.

In his call to LBC yesterday, Ian McNuff also raised another point that has perplexed residents: The Government last year announced plans to prioritise a polluted area of the River Thames in Teddington to make it clean and safe for wild swimming, yet it also gave the green light to Thames Water's Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP), which includes the Teddington Direct River Abstraction proposals. We were glad to hear you acknowledge that this "sounds like a mismatch".

I'm sure you can understand why residents, and bill payers across the southeast of England, are rightly asking why they should fund yet another white elephant that could damage both the ecology of the Thames, and river users' health, for very limited gain.

We look forward to hearing from you about when might be a convenient time to meet with Ian. We would also be pleased to join this meeting, on behalf of our constituents.

Yours sincerely,

Munira Wilson MP

Member of Parliament for Twickenham

Sarah Olney MP

Member of Parliament for Richmond Park