

Robert Courts MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

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Sir James Bevan
Chief Executive
Environment Agency
Kings Meadow House
King's Meadow Road
Reading RG1 8DQ

Friday, 22nd October 2021
Ref: rd/RC4789

Re: Alleged Illegal Sewage Spills – Thames Water

Dear Sir James,

We are writing with regard to the recent report published by the Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) campaign group, authored by Professor Peter Hammond. We understand that you have been sent a copy of the report but we have attached it to this letter for ease of reference.

The report alleges that Thames Water were responsible for over 700 illegal discharges of untreated sewage from 13 Sewage Treatment Works (STWs) between 2018-2020. The alleged illegal spills took place predominantly in our constituencies of West Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds, and is cause for serious concern.

The “dry” and “early” spills which the report alleges took place would constitute a breach of the permit conditions set out by the Environment Agency. They would also have had a detrimental impact on the health of our local rivers.

The allegations made in Professor Hammond’s report have understandably caused significant outrage and anger among local residents.

We are therefore writing to formally request that the Environment Agency urgently and thoroughly investigates the allegations made in the report.

It is vital that we understand what has happened here and, if Thames Water have indeed breached the conditions of their permit, we expect the Environment Agency to take appropriate enforcement action. Such blatant disregard for the law and the health of our environment, if found to be true, simply cannot go unpunished.

We look forward to hearing from you soon and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns in further detail.

Robert Courts MP
MP for Witney & West Oxfordshire

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
MP for The Cotswolds

*From the Member of Parliament for the constituency of Witney in West Oxfordshire
including Bampton, Burford, Carterton, Charlbury, Chipping Norton, Eynsham, Witney and Woodstock.*