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European Union Committee

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Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Nobel House
17 Smith Square
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9 March 2018

Dear Thérèse,

EM 5846/18: Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the quality of water intended for human consumption (recast)

Thank you for your Explanatory Memorandum (EM) on the above Communication, which was considered by our Energy and Environment Sub-Committee at its meeting on 7 March.

We note that your department is still in the process of considering the impact of the Proposal, in terms of the policy implications and in terms of subsidiarity. Please could you provide us with an update on your assessment?

It would be helpful to understand:

- Your assessment of the costs of implementing the Proposal. We note that you expect there to be an impact on water companies, government agencies and private suppliers. Do you agree with the Commission's assessment that there could also be an increase for consumers?
- The extent to which implementing this Proposal will require change. We note, for example, that risk assessments in England, Wales and Scotland are already undertaken from 'source to tap'. Would this Proposal require any additional risk assessment or monitoring to be undertaken?
- To what extent the UK already meets the proposed obligation to ensure access to drinking water for vulnerable groups. What further action, if any, do you believe would need to be taken?
- To what extent the UK already meets the proposed obligations on provision of information. What further action, if any, do you believe would need to be taken?

We note that, should the text be agreed quickly, the Proposal could come into force during a period in which the UK is still implementing EU law. If this is not the case, does the UK

Government intend to mirror changes to the existing water quality Directive that this recast brings in?

We have decided to retain the Proposal under scrutiny. We look forward to a reply to this letter within 10 working days.

I am copying this letter to Sir William Cash MP, the Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee, Lynn Gardner, Clerk of the European Scrutiny Committee; Arnold Ridout, Legal Adviser to the European Scrutiny Committee; Les Saunders, DExEU, and John Leach and Craig White, Scrutiny Coordinators, DEFRA.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Boswell

Lord Boswell of Aynho
Chairman of the European Union Committee