

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs

**Councillor David Rouane
Leader of the Council**

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Via email:
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21 November 2024

Dear Mr Reed,

I write as Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council to express our longstanding and continuing dismay at the wholesale failings of Thames Water.

At a meeting on 24 October 2024 our full Council resolved as follows:

That Council notes:

The Water Industry Act 1991 gives government the power to place water companies into Special Administration where they are either in financial distress or have breached their licence or statutory duties to a degree that makes it inappropriate for the company to continue operating.

Sewage treatment works in South Oxfordshire have released untreated sewage into the River Thames or its tributaries for more than 15,500 hours so far this year. Almost two thirds – 157 - of all Thames Water’s sewage treatment works are potentially non-compliant with their permits.

Thames Water loses around one quarter of its drinking water to its own leaks.

The company is struggling to service its £18bn debt mountain and this year has had its debt downgraded to “junk” by credit ratings agencies Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s.

This council:

- 1. Declares it has no confidence in Thames Water;*
- 2. Calls on government to exercise its powers under the Water Industry Act 1991, and place Thames Water and other failing water companies in Special Administration to protect the public interest;*
- 3. Calls on government to end the failed experiment of privatisation and bring Thames Water back into public control;*

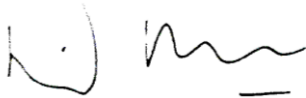
4. *Supports calls by grassroots campaign organisations to amend the Water (Special Measures) Bill currently progressing through Parliament to:*

- *Stop the public bailout of the water industry proposed under s10 of the Bill;*
- *Reform the duties of Ofwat to be for the interests of the public and nature;*
- *Re-democratise water by having employees, billpayers and council appointees on the boards of all water companies in England.*

By means of this letter I am hereby formally requesting that you take action to reform Thames Water as set out in points 2 and 3 of the resolution above, and that you take steps to improve the industry as a whole as noted at point 4 above.

I look forward to a prompt and substantive response.

Yours sincerely



Cllr David Rouane
Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council