

Julie James MS  
Minister for Climate Change

18 November 2021

Dear Julie,

### **Sewage discharges from storm overflows**

At the Committee's 11 November 2021 meeting, we discussed the amendments to the UK Environment Bill, now the Environment Act 2021 ('the 2021 Act'), in relation to the discharge of untreated sewage, which were considered during ping pong.

We understand that the 2021 Act includes provisions which aim to reduce the adverse impact of discharges from storm overflows of sewage undertakers in England, including:

- a requirement on sewage undertakers to secure a progressive reduction in the adverse impact of discharges from their storm overflows;
- a requirement on the Secretary of State to prepare a storm overflow discharge reduction plan and to report annually on progress towards implementation;
- a requirement on sewage undertakers to publish annual reports in relation to their storm overflows; and
- a requirement on the Environment Agency to publish reports in relation to the operation of storm overflows of sewerage undertakers.

There are no equivalent provisions in relation to Wales.

The Committee agreed I should write to you to request a response to the following questions.

- What are the current regulatory arrangements governing discharges from storm overflows of sewage undertakers in Wales?

- To what extent do the requirements in the 2021 Act mean that rivers and coastal areas in England are better protected from the adverse impacts of sewage discharges from storm overflows than those in Wales?
- What work are you undertaking, or do you plan to undertake, to reduce sewage discharges from storm overflows in Wales?
- What consideration have you given, or will be giving, to legislating with the aim of reducing the adverse impact of sewage discharges from storm overflows in Wales?
- What discussions have you had, or do you plan to have, with UK counterparts about reducing any adverse impact of sewerage discharges from storm overflows in cross border catchments?

I should be grateful if you would provide a response as soon as possible, and by Thursday 2 December 2021 at the latest.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,  
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.