

Julie James AS/MS
Y Gweinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Minister for Climate Change



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref: P-06-1232
Ein cyf/Our ref: JJ/00647/23

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair - Petitions committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

2 June 2023

Dear Jack Sargeant MS,

Thank you for your letter of 25 October requesting an update following the River Pollution Summit at the Royal Welsh Show and an update on the Technical Advice Note for intensive agricultural development.

The First Minister chaired the second River Pollution Summit on the 8 March. A written statement was issued that set out the discussions which took place and the commitments made by the organisations taking part. The statement can be found on the Welsh Government website at: <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-second-river-pollution-summit>

The summit endorsed an action plan 'Relieving Pressures on SAC River Catchments to Support Delivery of Affordable Housing'. The Action Plan includes the production of various guidance to help address the problems caused by phosphorus levels, and this is also available on the Welsh Government website at: <https://www.gov.wales/relieving-pressures-special-areas-conservation-sac-river-catchments-support-delivery-affordable>

The summit recognised there is no single measure which will solve this problem and even a contribution of measures will take time to undo the cumulative harm of the past. One theme the action plan includes is the need to work constructively with the agriculture sector to find solutions to reduce and address excess nutrients in the soil and SAC rivers of Wales. I expect this work to include a contribution from the poultry sector.

I recognise new poultry developments have the potential to increase nutrient levels within river catchments, so I am giving careful consideration to a request received to call in all planning applications for poultry units currently before Powys County Council. Holding directions preventing the Council from approving the applications have recent been issued by officials. I will notify you of my decision on whether to call in the applications in due course.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

I am pleased to confirm work is progressing on the procurement of an All Wales Nutrient Calculator, intended to help local planning authorities and applicants determine the level of phosphorus mitigation needed to enable development to progress in SAC river catchments. Contractors have just been appointed to deliver a working calculator by July and subsequently deliver a training programme.

In addition, a review of guidance relating to private treatment plants in areas with public sewers is currently being undertaken. This work is considering whether there are any short-term measures which could be implemented whilst long-term solutions to phosphorus levels are developed by Nutrient Management Boards, established to drive local measures to help improve the quality of SAC river catchments.

A Town and Country Planning Intensive Agriculture Working Group was established in 2019, comprised of stakeholders from public sector, farming unions and environmental groups. The Working Group was set up to contribute to a proposed new Technical Advice Note relating to planning for intensive agricultural developments, however, this was paused due to the pandemic. While it is the intention to return to this work, priority has been given to progressing the All Wales Nutrient Calculator and reviewing guidance relating to private treatment plans.

Yours sincerely,



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