

# Press release: Polluter to submit plans for River Witham repairs

- The notice requires agricultural and fertiliser company Omex Agriculture Limited to submit proposals for repairing the river
- Ammonia entered the River Witham in March of this year and caused the worst river pollution ever recorded in Lincolnshire
- An investigation into the circumstances continues

The company responsible for a major pollution on the River Witham that killed at least 100,000 fish has been told they must develop plans to restore the river.

The Environment Agency has issued agricultural and fertiliser company Omex Agriculture Limited with a 'notice of liability' under the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2015.

The notice – only the second the Environment Agency has issued since the regulations came into place – requires the company to develop plans for repairing the environmental damage caused when ammonia entered the river in March 2018.

The ammonia affected the river from Bardney to the Wash, severely impacting the condition of the river and its ecosystems. It's thought to be the worst river pollution incident ever recorded in the county.

Manfai Tang, environment manager at the Environment Agency, said:

We know the pollution had a devastating effect on delicate river ecosystems, and issuing this notice means the process of helping the river recover to its natural, healthy state can start sooner.

It's one way we're working to protect and improve our environment for local people and wildlife. We look forward to receiving proposals from Omex for review, and working with them to restore the Witham.

After the incident, Environment Agency experts and biologists worked tirelessly with other organisations to clean up the pollution and mitigate the damage. Fisheries teams have since re-stocked the river with more than 1.5 million fish larvae, including common bream, roach and tench, plus re-introducing around 40,000 roach and common bream ranging from 30 to 40mm long.

Meanwhile, the Environment Agency is continuing to investigate the circumstances of the pollution. Further action will be considered once the investigation is complete.

Anyone who suspects a pollution incident is urged to report it to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

- Under the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2015, a Notice of Liability allows the Environment Agency to require a polluter to take steps to remediate the damage done by a pollution incident.
- Once the notice is served, the recipient has 28 days to lodge an appeal.
- The polluter has until mid-January to submit their proposals. The Environment Agency must be satisfied the plan represents the best results for the environment.
- This measure is taken separate to the ongoing investigation under the Environmental Permitting Regulations.

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## **Press release: New Homes under construction in south Warrington**

Homes England and Barratt Homes are working together to deliver 180 new family homes on Pewterspear Green Road, Stretton, Cheshire.

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## **Press release: Highways England helps football fans reach festive fixtures**

At one of the busiest times of the year football fans are gearing up to travel the country to see their teams in action during the hectic festive fixture schedule.

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## **Press release: UK and allies reveal global scale of Chinese cyber campaign**

The UK government and its allies are holding responsible elements of the Chinese government for an extensive cyber campaign

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## Speech: Condemning Hizballah's illegal activities

Thank you very much indeed Mr President. I would like to join other colleagues in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for his briefing and I'd like to join other colleagues in making clear that the United Kingdom also condemns Hizballah's building of tunnels leading into Israel. As others have noted Mr President, it is a clear violation by Hizballah of Security Council resolution 1701. It threatens Israel's security, it threatens Lebanon's security and it threatens regional stability. We are clear that Israel has the right to defend itself against Hizballah and all other armed militia groups which put the security of Israel at risk. All Israelis, all Lebanese, have the right to live in peace without fear for their security.

For too long Mr President, as other speakers have noted, we have witnessed Hizballah blatantly disregard UN resolutions. Their continued possession of weapons outside of Lebanese state control; their reported attempts to acquire dangerous new missile capabilities; as well as their statements threatening Israel, remain deeply alarming. Without an end to Hizballah's illegal activities in Lebanon, and the region, we will continue to see regional stability threatened.

The United Kingdom recognises the important work carried out by UNIFIL in maintaining calm and stability along the Blue Line over the last 12 years and we pay tribute to those nations who have provided commanders and troops for UNIFIL throughout that time. But the existence of the tunnels reinforces the importance of ensuring UNIFIL's mandate is effective and strong, and that it has full access to all areas within its operation. We condemn any attempts at restricting UNIFIL's freedom of movement. We recognise that there is a question of access to private property in the context of investigating where the tunnels are and we recognise this can be difficult. But it is not impossible to resolve this issue and we look forward to a workable solution being found.

We welcome UNIFIL's response and its actions to monitor the situation in addition, and maintain calm, including by deploying additional troops and liaison teams to sensitive locations along the Blue Line. It is vitally important that UNIFIL continues to liaise closely with the Lebanese and Israeli authorities. We call on the Lebanese state, and in particular the Lebanese Armed Forces, as the sole and legitimate defenders of Lebanon, to take appropriate action to neutralise the tunnels as a matter of urgency, working closely with UNIFIL. And we encourage Israel to continue sharing with UNIFIL, to the fullest extent possible, any information that would assist UNIFIL and the LAF in taking action. Where there are difficulties we urge all parties to work together constructively to overcome these. It is in neither side's interest for the situation to escalate.

Mr President, the United Kingdom has been clear in this Council on many occasions that we condemn Israeli violations of Lebanese sovereignty, whether by land, sea or air. Such actions undermine confidence and stability and we call for all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular 1559 and 1701, to be respected in full. In this regard, the UK welcomes the commitments by both Israel and Lebanon including the recent statement from the Lebanese Foreign Ministry on the full implementation of 1701, refusal to accept any violations and respect of the Blue Line.

Mr President, finally the UK calls on all sides to continue to abide by their commitments and to avoid actions and rhetoric that could destabilise the situation and region.

Thank you Mr President.