

Greens call for action on water companies as England faces heat health-alert and drought



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The Green Party has called for a series of measures to help stop three billion litres of water being wasted each day as a heat health-alert comes into force and England faces its worst drought in decades, with many households facing hosepipe bans and water shortages.

Greens are calling for an immediate enforcement order on water companies, along with a cut to executive pay, an end to dividends to shareholders and for the water supply to be brought back into public ownership as soon as is practicable to do so. They point to monopoly water companies losing between a quarter and a fifth of the water in their mains through unrepaired leaks while sewage regularly flows into rivers and coastlines [1].

Adrian Ramsay, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“As the country faces a severe drought and people are asked to cut their water use, more than three billion litres of clean water is wasted every day due to a network of pipes riddled with leaks [2]. Shockingly, the most wasteful water companies waste more water than they provide to their customers. It’s time to hold the water companies and the water regulator to account and see some firm action against this scandal.

“We need Ofwat to apply an enforcement order on companies to properly carry out their statutory functions [3] – which includes ensuring that water actually reaches people’s homes and sewage doesn’t go into watercourses or end up on our coastline.

“But beyond that, the water industry cannot continue to be rewarded for failure. The £57bn paid out in dividends over the last 30 years [4] and hugely inflated salaries of water bosses [5] should have gone towards

plugging the leaks. Instead of these companies being awash with profits and leaking funds towards shareholders, Greens say we should cut dividends and ensure water bosses earn no more than ten times the salary of the lowest paid in their companies.

“Ultimately, to end leaks, stop sewage discharges and cut bills we need to take the water supply back into public ownership, which is what the Green Party believes must be done at the earliest practicable opportunity.”

Notes

[1] [Ofwat's patience with water firms is drying up | The Times](#)

[2] [Wasting Water | Billions of Litres UK | Maintain Drains](#)

[3] [Our duties – Ofwat](#)

[4] [England's privatised water firms paid £57bn in dividends since 1991 | The Guardian](#)

[5] [Water bosses' £58m pay over last five years a 'national scandal' | The Guardian](#)

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