

House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee calls for more metering and targets to reduce per capita consumption

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The House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee has said the UK government should allow all water companies to implement compulsory metering, and set a cross-government target for per capita consumption reduction over the next 25 years.



Photo: Nicci Russell and panel at the inquiry meeting on 20 June

Waterwise is an independent not-for-profit organisation based in the UK with the vision that water will be used wisely, everyday, everywhere. We responded to the House of Commons Select Committee Inquiry on Regulation of the Water Industry and on 20th June our MD, Nicci Russell, gave oral evidence - alongside the Chartered Institution for Water and Environmental Management, the Blueprint for Water NGO coalition and the Homebuilders Federation.

The report released today sets out a range of findings on reducing demand. These include:

- Domestic consumption targets - 'Per capita consumption (PCC) targets provide an incentive for water companies to help consumers reduce demand for water. Ambitious targets can also lead to more innovation in the water industry. It is disappointing that the Government has not yet supported a specific PCC target. A cross-Government target for PCC reduction over the next 25 years should be published, alongside plans for how the target could be achieved.'



- Metering - ‘We consider that using meters to ensure customers pay for the water they use, rather than basing bills on the outdated system of rateable values, sends a strong message to customers about the value of water. There is strong evidence that metering helps to reduce water use and to detect leaks. Allowing compulsory metering only in water-stressed areas causes regional disparities that are inappropriate given the national need to conserve water. We endorse the recommendation of the National Infrastructure Commission that Defra should amend regulations by the end of 2019 to allow all water companies to implement compulsory metering, using smart meters. Water companies should use these powers to help achieve ambitious PCC reduction targets, while also engaging customers about the value of water and the benefits of using a meter. Support for economically vulnerable customers should be strengthened should metering lead to significant bill increases.’

Nicci Russell said:

‘We’re delighted that the Committee put water efficiency at the heart of their recommendations on regulation of the water sector. We’d like to see all the water companies in England and Wales committing to 100 litres per person or less by 2045 or earlier. We’ve seen increased ambition from companies in their 25-year water resource management plans and business plans for the 2019 price review and look forward to working with companies to help them deliver these and aim even higher”

Notes to Editors

Find the link to the report, and oral and written evidence [here](#).

Find more information on Waterwise’s Water Efficiency Strategy for the UK [here](#).

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