



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Environment
Agency



Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales

www.gov.uk/defra
www.wales.gov.uk

15 January 2016

Dear Consultee,

Consultation on Changes to Water Abstraction Licensing Exemptions in England and Wales: New Authorisations

We are writing to invite your views on the proposed changes to water abstraction licensing exemptions in England and Wales. Defra are consulting jointly with the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales on our intended approach to bring most currently exempt water abstractions into the licensing system.

As the water abstraction licensing system in England and Wales has developed over the past 50 years certain abstractions have remained exempt from licensing control and legally able to take an unlimited supply of water, even in areas that are water stressed. We want to bring the majority of exempt abstractors into the licensing system to enable the Regulators to better manage water sustainably at a catchment level and help to balance the needs of all abstractors and the environment.

The consultation runs for 12 weeks from 15 January 2016 to 8 April 2016.

Part I of the document includes our response to the 2009 consultation on implementing the abstraction elements of the Water Act 2003. Part II of the document explains our revised proposal and seeks views on the remaining questions. The consultation will be of interest to both existing licensed abstractors and currently exempt abstractors. We encourage you to share this consultation widely with other individuals and organisations who will be interested in the changes.

The activities that will be impacted by the changes include water transfers by navigation, harbour or conservancy authorities, abstraction of water into internal drainage districts,

dewatering mines, quarries and engineering works, warping, all forms of irrigation and the use of land drainage systems in reverse to maintain field water levels, abstractions in exempt areas and abstractions covered by Crown and visiting forces exemptions. We propose to begin bringing these New Authorisations into the licensing system in 2016. Some abstractions that are considered low risk will remain exempt.

We welcome your views and comments on the proposals which are set out fully in our consultation document. This is available at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/water-abstraction-licensing-exemptions>.

Responses

The consultation questions are listed in the consultation document and in the online consultation survey.

Please complete the online consultation survey at:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/water-abstraction-licensing-exemptions>.

Alternatively, you can return your responses by email to either Defra at waterresources.consultations@defra.gsi.gov.uk or the Welsh Government at water@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

If you prefer you can respond by post to Defra or the Welsh Government at:

New Authorisations,
Water Resources Management,
Area 3D Nobel House,
17 Smith Square,
London
SW1P 3JR

New Authorisations,
Water Branch,
The Welsh Government,
Cathays Park,
Cardiff
CF10 4NQ

Consultation Criteria

This consultation is in line with the UK Government's Consultations Principles. This can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/consultation-principles-guidance>.

Summary of responses and confidentiality

Any responses you send us may be seen in full by staff at Defra, the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales who are dealing with the issues which this consultation is about. It may also be seen by other staff to help them plan future consultations.

When this consultation ends we will summarise all responses and place this summary online, available through the UK Government website at www.gov.uk. This summary will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details. If you require a hard copy of the summary, or have any other enquiries, please contact us at: waterresources.consultations@defra.gsi.gov.uk or water@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

We will store a copy of the responses received for at least six months from the date the consultation responses document has been published. This is so that the public can see them and copies of responses will be made available to the public on request. Also, members of the public may ask for a copy of responses under freedom of information legislation.

If you do not want your response - including your name, contact details and any other personal information – to be publicly available, please say so clearly in writing when you send your response to the consultation.

Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, that won't count as a confidentiality request.

Please explain why you need to keep details confidential. We will take your reasons into account if someone asks for this information under freedom of information legislation. But, because of the law, we cannot promise that we will always be able to keep those details confidential.

If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to: Defra Consultation Co-ordinator, Room 629, 9 Millbank, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR; or email consultation.coordinator@defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to consider and respond to this consultation.

Yours Faithfully

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Welsh Government

Environment Agency

Natural Resources Wales