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Emily Shirley

Our ref: TO2020/21349/SG

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Dear Ms Shirley,

Thank you for your email of 18 August to the Secretary of State about the National Policy Statement (NPS) for water resources infrastructure. I have been asked to reply.

The NPS sets out the need of Government's policies for the development of nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) for water resources in England. It also provides planning guidance for developers of NSIPs, as defined in the Planning Act 2008.

Defra recognises the benefits of integrated water resource management, and the catchment based approach remains central in the development and delivery of river basin management plans. It was also central to our abstraction plan, published in 2017.

These plans, in turn, help inform the water companies' statutory water resources management plans (WRMPs). We expect any NSIPs to come forward only after appropriate assessment of all options to balance supply and demand has taken place within the WRMP process. We will respond to the Public Accounts Committee report on 'Water Supply and Demand Management' in due course.

The draft NPS was laid before Parliament in November 2018 and is made publicly available on the GOV.UK website at: [https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/draft-national-policy-statement/supporting\\_documents/draftnpswaterresourcesinfrastructure.pdf](https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/draft-national-policy-statement/supporting_documents/draftnpswaterresourcesinfrastructure.pdf)

The Government's consultation on the draft NPS ran from 29 November 2018 to 31 January 2019. We appreciate the input of TBGE to the consultation. The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee held an inquiry into the draft NPS and published its report in April 2019.

The report can be found online on the UK Parliament website at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/1978/1978.pdf>

We plan to lay the final NPS before Parliament and publish associated documents, including the Government response to the consultation as well as the response to the EFRA Committee report, in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Ganya  
Ministerial Contact Unit