

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
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ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 18th JUNE 2019**

Question

In the light of reports of projected major water shortages by 2045, will the Minister explain his Department's policy in respect of protecting the Island's water supplies and discouraging wastage of water on an Island-wide basis, highlighting what targets, if any, to which his Department is working?

Answer

Water is a vital resource, especially for an island that has a finite supply. Everyone has a role to play to safeguard both its quality and availability, not only for our own use but also for the ecosystems that depend on it.

Environmental Protection (EP), Growth, Housing and Environment protect and regulate this important resource. This includes surface water (streams, reservoirs, ponds, etc.), groundwater and coastal waters. As part of this, EP undertake a comprehensive monitoring program of these water resources. This includes both water quality and quantity (groundwater levels). The water quality data is supplemented by that collected by Jersey Water.

This data set informs a 'Water Challenges' document that presents the current status of the island's water resource (either quality and/or quantity) and identifies the key pressures acting on it. The solutions to these evidence-based challenges are detailed in the [Water Management Plan](#). The current plan (2017-2021) was agreed by the States in December 2016 and is available on the GoJ website. The next plan will continue this process, ensuring that changing environmental standards, pressures and emerging contaminants etc., continue to be considered and addressed.

The overarching legislation covering the protection of water quality is the Water Pollution (Jersey) Law 2000, which is administered by EP. The law provides powers to EP officers to attend, investigate and address water pollution incidents. This is done according to Enforcement Policies that have been agreed by the Attorney General. The regulatory approach is reinforced by pro-active public campaigns and working with stakeholders to change behaviour. EP's work with stakeholders is increasing, especially given diffuse sources of pollution such as nitrates and pesticides (as evidenced by the work of the joint Action for Cleaner Water Group).

The legislation covering water quantity is the Water Resources (Jersey) Law 2007. This requires that all abstractors of surface or groundwater must be registered or licensed if they use more than 15m³ in a 24 hour period. This allows EP officers to better protect such sources, including boreholes and wells, and to regulate abstractions to safeguard the island's water supplies, especially during droughts, through the drought plan.

Targets for water quality are set out in the current Water Management Plan. Medium term targets include lowering nitrate levels and reducing pesticide detections. Longer term targets include all streams and groundwater achieving nitrate levels below 50 mg/l (the EU limit) and achieving 'good status' (an EU Water Framework Directive indicator) for nitrates and phosphates.

The use and wastage of the public water supply is largely covered by Jersey Water, although the Government Eco-Active team also run campaigns (e.g.: Get Water Smart campaign). Water use and wastage from surface or groundwater abstractions is addressed by EP through licencing conditions, with each licensee being assessed for a defined volume. All abstractor's might also face restrictions on water use during droughts.