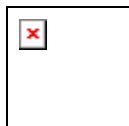


SUPPLY OF BOTTLED WATER

**Lodged au Greffe on 2nd November 1999
by the Deputy of St. John**



STATES OF JERSEY

STATES GREFFE

175

1999

P.177

Price code: A

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion -

- (1) to agree to investigate the feasibility of providing a potable bottled water supply at reduced cost for mothers of very young children and other people at risk, until such time as the Medical Officer of Health declares that the Island's water supply is fit for this section of the community to drink;
- (2) to charge the Health and Social Services Committee, in conjunction with any other Committee involved, to report to the States Assembly within three months with fully costed recommendations.

DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN

Report

On 13th September the Medical Officer of Health wrote to notify all general practitioners of the following -

“Most of you will be aware that the groundwater of Jersey is highly contaminated by nitrates, and to a lesser extent by pesticides and pesticide residues. People on private supplies are also liable to have water which may be aggressive and dissolve metals from the piping system, and also be liable to bacterial and other forms of pollution.

I think it is necessary to warn people on private supplies of the risks that they may be facing and in particular for pregnant women, very young children and patients on certain forms of treatment may run a particular risk of developing Methaemoglobinaemia. However, there are a number of risks which are avoided by being on the public supply but over the last three years there has been a significant increase in the amount of nitrate being detected in the supply and I believe you should consider whether to advise people who may be at risk from high nitrate levels to consider using other assured supplies of water that do not have high levels of nitrate.

Also, over this period the average nitrate content in the water supply has risen from just over 50 mg/l which is acceptable level under the EU Drinking Water Directive, to an average level some 30% above the 50 mg/l level. In my view, this rise significantly reduces the safety factor for those susceptible to Methaemoglobinaemia.

C.R. Grainger
Medical Officer of Health”

Given the concern expressed to myself by a pregnant mother, I believe that in the interest of the well-being of this vulnerable group within our community, who in general are the less well-off within the Island, some assistance should be provided to relieve the potentially heavy burden of having to purchase good drinking water.

I therefore ask the States to instruct the relevant Committees to investigate giving subsidies to these people on the proof of a doctor's certificate and report back to the Assembly within the stated period.