



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Emma Reynolds MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Reference No. HW72204

17 March 2026

Dear Emma

**Ofwat proposal to fine South East Water £22 for failings dating back to 2020**

The recent proposal from Ofwat to fine South East Water £22m for a catalogue of failings dating back to not learning the lessons from the Beast from the East in 2018 have all occurred on the watch of the current leadership. This shows the Chief Executive of South East Water is part of the problem and I ask for your support to push for his removal.

Both Ofwat and the Drinking Water Inspectorate are currently investigating the recent outages and South East Water's response to them. I ask you to do everything you can to ensure these investigations conclude at pace. People should not have to wait years for another investigation inevitably reaching the same conclusions as the last one.

It is not sustainable for South East Water to have to keep paying huge fines that will prevent it from investing properly in the network. The fines will also almost certainly lead to increased water bills resulting in people effectively paying twice over for the outages. I would also ask if you could press for some of that money to go to affected residents and businesses during the outages.

As I said in my previous letter to you with other MPs, I would like to meet with you to discuss what steps you will take to prevent future water outages in Kent and to ensure that should this happen, there is a much more effective emergency response.

Yours sincerely

Helen Whately MP  
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent