EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL ENVIRONMENT
Directorate D – Implementation, Governance and Semester
ENV.D.3 – Enforcement, Cohesion Policy and European Semester, Cluster 3
Head of Unit

Brussels, 11. 12. 2015
EU-PILOT 7544/2015/ENVI

Mr Tony Lowes
Friends of the Irish Environment

admin@friendsoftheirishenvironment.org

Dear Mr Lowes,

Subject: **EU Pilot file 7544/2015/ENVI - Trihalomethanes – Total parametric value exceedances in the Irish drinking water supplies**

I refer to your complaint registered initially under the reference number CHAP(2011)2691 and later under the reference number 7544/2015/ENVI.

I would like to provide you with a short overview of recent developments regarding your complaint. As mentioned in our previous letter of 11 May 2015, the Commission services asked additional questions from the Irish authorities via EU Pilot file 7544/2015/ENVI. Specifically, we asked the authorities to provide more information on the remedial measures it was taking in relation to all the water supplies where trihalomethanes (THM) exceedances had been registered in accordance with Article 8(2) of the Drinking Water Directive and to elaborate on its commitments to inform the public in accordance with Article 8(3) and 8(7) of the Directive.

Since then, we have received a thorough reply from the Irish authorities on 28 September 2015, which was followed by a meeting on 1st December 2015 in Brussels.

In their communication, the Irish authorities have assured us that they take the matter very seriously and have put in place a comprehensive action plan of enforcement and remedial actions to fully satisfy the requirements of the Drinking Water Directive in respect of THMs. On the basis of the latest Irish Water review, it appears that around 412 000 persons are possibly affected by the THM exceedances in 79 water supply zones on the EPA Remedial Action List (RAL)[1]. The action plan foresees a series of interim and long-term measures with the intention to progressively achieving full compliance with the THM parametric value by the end of 2020. The interim measures include *inter alia* measures such as disinfection optimisation, securing an alternative supply and ensuring improved raw water management.

[1] The RAL is updated by EPA on a quarterly basis and the most recent version (Q3, 2015) can be obtained at the following link: http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/water/drinking/dwralq32015.html

European Commission, B-1049 Brussels - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11.
Office: BU-9 2/184. Telephone: direct line: (32-2) 296 41 35
E-mail: paul.speight@ec.europa.eu

The action plan also includes a programme of increased monitoring and analyses. The main long term plans include upgrade of treatment plants or connection to alternative supply.

In relation to informing and notifying the public concerned, the Irish authorities agreed that there is a need to substantially improve consumer communications in relation to THMs. Irish Water has proposed to enhance consumer awareness by way of national awareness campaigns, through project and programme communications, as well as Irish Water communications around remedial action lists, drinking water quality reports and capital investment plans. Consumer advice is also now available on the Irish Water website www.water.ie since October 2015. Consumers can access the data for water quality for all public drinking water supplies and are able to see the latest drinking water results for particular water supply zone, which can be located by an address search or a map location tool. The site will also provide with notification of remedial actions being taken by Irish Water and will notify consumers in relation to any precautions or restrictions that should apply based on the advice of EPA or the HSE. It is the understanding of the Commission that all Irish Water customers are advised of the website through Irish Water billing which reaches over 1.5 million domestic premises nationally.

The Commission will now regularly monitor the compliance with the action plan and has asked the Irish authorities to provide the next update on the progress made in March 2016. We will keep you informed of any follow up to this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Speight

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