

Letter sent to the I and the Guardian by Lynne Jones MBE

In the decades to come water will be an increasingly vital resource. Nationally we will need to be able to efficiently transfer water from water rich areas to those experiencing drought AND manage the water storage infrastructure in such a way that it does not create a flood risk for communities downstream of reservoirs. Should we be relying on these greedy, dishonest water companies to prepare for that challenge with their background of using any wriggle room, that loosely worded legislation offers them, to get permission to charge their customers more and more, whilst shareholder profits and director's salaries go on unchallenged and unquestioned?

The Environment Agency is keen to emphasise that it is there to protect the environment. As a Flood Action Group we are often warned that any actions to protect our community must in no way harm the environment and biodiversity, and yet we watch as water companies do staggering amounts of damage by discharging untreated sewage with complete impunity. The relationship between the EA, DEFRA and Ofwat is completely dysfunctional, allowing water companies, with their snouts in the trough, to make a mockery of our water management.

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Chair  
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**Note to Editor:** You should be doing some good quality investigative journalism into reservoirs and their contribution to flood risk. When Sheffield (River Don catchment October 2019) flooded the reservoirs in the upper catchment were overflowing pre-storm. We live below Thirlmere reservoir (UU operates it sadly) and our town has never flooded if there is adequate storm space in the reservoir. There are similar implications for the Severn when the reservoirs in its upper catchment are overflowing. We need some focus on flood risk management with climate change. The water companies prefer to hoard water and have no sense of a duty of care to those who live below their assets.