



Water companies must plug 3 billion litre leaks to stop UK running out of water says GMB

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England's privatised water companies let more than 950 Olympic-sized swimming pools' worth of water go down the plug hole every day says GMB Union.

GMB, the water workers' union, says the answer to Environment Agency warnings the UK will run out of water could be solved if water companies stop wasting 3 billion litres a day.

Sir James Bevan, chief executive of the Environment Agency, is expected to say in a speech the country is facing an 'existential threat;' and will not have enough water to meet demand within 25 years.

“When the Environment Agency issues dire warnings about the UK running out of water we need to listen.

“However surely the first step is for England's privatised water companies to stop letting more than 950 Olympic-sized swimming pools' worth of water go down the plug hole every single day.*

“Pressuring everyone to use less of this most basic necessity through ever rising bills is not the solution.

Stuart Fegan, GMB National Officer

Water companies across England and Wales lost 3 billion litres of treated water every single day in 2017. See table at the bottom of the page for a breakdown of leakages for the nine major water companies.

Meanwhile a study from the National Audit Office showed that people's water bills have increased by 40% above inflation since the water industry was privatised by Margaret Thatcher's government in 1989.



“It is clear to almost everyone it seems except Government and the EA that water infrastructure in the UK needs serious investment

“The summer is coming, but the UK currently uses less than 2% of the water that falls from the sky each year and which flows into the sea.

“The warning by Sir James Bevan only highlights the failure that the privatised water sector in England has been over the last 30 years in managing our precious resource. We need to return water to public ownership if we are going to meet public demand.

“So whatever the weather, we need to Take Back The Tap and ensure our water services are run in the interests of the public once more and not just those of mainly overseas shareholders”?

Stuart Fegan, GMB National Officer

Company leakage per day (000,000s)	2016-17
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Water and sewerage companies?

Anglian	180.0
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Northumbrian	133.8
Severn Trent	431.6
South West	84.4
Southern	88.1
Thames	677.2
United Utilities	439.2
Wessex	68.4
Yorkshire	295.2

Total leakage from big 9 water & sewerage companies 2397.9

***Olympic sized swimming pool contain 2,500,000 litres of water:**

**Olympic size pools measure: 50 metres long, 25 metres wide, and a minimum of 2 metres deep.
(25m x 50m x 2m = 2,500m³; 1L = 0.001m³ so 2,500 x 1000 = 2,500,000L)?**

2397,900,000 (litres wasted per day)/2,500,000 = 959.16

