

**PE1646/B**

Scottish Government submission of 27 June 2017

I refer to your letter of 5 June 2017 which seeks a response in regard to petition PE1646.

The post of the Drinking Water Quality Regulator (the Regulator) was created by the Water Industry (Scotland) Act 2002 (the Act). The Act recognised, for the first time in Scotland, the necessity of an independent regulator to ensure that Scotland's drinking water quality, whether provided via public systems operated by Scottish Water or by private arrangements, meets necessary standards so as to protect public health.

The Act enables Scottish Ministers to appoint a Drinking Water Quality Regulator. The Regulator is accountable to Scottish Ministers and through them to Parliament.

The Act specifies the Regulator's duties and powers in relation to public supplies and supervisory role in relation to private supplies which are overseen by Local Authorities. In particular, the Act provides the Regulator with enforcement powers to ensure that action is taken when drinking water quality is not of the appropriate standard. There is no role for the Government in relation to the enforcement of these standards.

The Act requires the Regulator to publish a comprehensive annual report. The most recent report, which covered the year 2015, showed the highest ever level of compliance with the relevant quality standards had been achieved for the public supply. These results are based on an extensive monitoring regime as required by the Water (Scotland) Act 1980 and as detailed in the Public Water Supplies (Scotland) Regulations 2014. As is evident from her annual reports, the Regulator is effectively performing her statutory duty, and the Scottish Government does not intend to review her role.

In relation to chloramination, the Government understands that this technology is used widely within the water industry in the UK and internationally to ensure that drinking water is of the necessary quality both when it leaves the water treatment works and when it reaches customers' taps regardless of the distance between the two. The Government is confident that, when selecting the appropriate treatment method, Scottish Water will have regard to the best industry advice and practice. Scottish Water is a member of WaterUK, an industry-led organisation which provides a forum for ensuring that Scottish Water keeps itself abreast of all relevant developments and research.

The Scottish Government is confident that the regulatory regime is robust and is working effectively in the interests of customers. The roles and responsibilities of the Scottish Government, Scottish Water, Local Authorities and the Regulator are clearly set out in Acts of Parliament and there is no conflict of interest in the framework.