August 20, 2007

On behalf of the Blueprint for Water campaign
www.blueprintforwater.org.uk

Sir,

Every year we use more and more water in our homes yet only 30 per cent of households have a water meter. As a result, few of us know just how much water we use or waste.

With thousands of new homes planned and climate change threatening our water supplies, we must waste less now or face the possibility that there will not be enough for us or for wildlife in the future.

That is why we welcome the announcement from the Environment Minister, Phil Woolas, that it will be easier for water companies to apply for compulsory water metering (Mandatory water meters a step closer, August 17).

Indeed, we believe the Government should go further. Organisations involved in the Blueprint for Water campaign are calling for every home in England to have a water meter by 2020.

Of course, such a move will have to be matched by new tariff schemes that penalise waste while protecting vulnerable customers from water poverty. And customers should be helped by water companies to understand their meter data and adopt water saving measures that will also cut water bills.

Meters are not the only answer but used together with low-volume flush toilets, water efficient taps and showers, they can help us dramatically cut the amount of precious water we pour needlessly away every day.

We also stress the need for stronger action against water companies that fail to control their own water leakage problems – consumers quite rightly feel aggrieved when the water they have saved is needlessly wasted by the water company.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Mark Avery
Director of Conservation, RSPB

Peter Nixon
Director of Conservation, The National Trust

David Nussbaum
Chief Executive, WWF- UK

Arlin Rickard
Director, Association of Rivers Trusts

Matt Shardlow
Director, Buglife – Invertebrate Conservation Trust

Martin Spray
Chief Executive, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT)

Jacob Tompkins
Director, Waterwise