

Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith /
Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
Bil drafft Diogelu'r Amgylchedd (Cynhyrchion Plastig Untro) (Cymru)/
Draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Products)(Wales) Bill
SUP_14
Ymateb gan Hafren Dyfrdwy / Evidence from Severn Trent

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Senedd's Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee on our views on the draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Produces)(Wales) Bill.

Hafren Dyfrdwy provides water and waste water services to 100,000 households and businesses across our communities in Mid and North Wales. Each day we supply round 61 million litres of clean drinking water and treat over 18 million litres of sewage through our network of over 3,000km of water mains and sewers.

We welcome all initiatives to reduce the amount of littered plastic found in the environment that can end up in our sewerage network causing blockages and increasing the risk of sewer flooding. As a company we carefully monitor our single use plastic, and in addition to minimising use, we recycle as much as possible. For example, we use plastic water sample bottles that are recycled into garden furniture and we are looking to trial Stokboard sheets our operations team use during excavations and for pedestrian access across grass verges where we have single footways. Although plastic, these sheets are multi-use with a buyback policy where the sheets are recycled. We are very mindful that in the event of water supply interruptions we provide our customers with bottled water and in these instances we encourage our customers to recycle the empty containers.

We note that plastic containing wet wipes are currently not listed as one of the items to be banned in the draft Environmental Protection (Single-use Plastic Produces)(Wales) Bill. Wet wipes that do not have the 'fine to flush' mark form a significant issue as we treat the waste water, as not only do they create blockages within our sewerage network, they have to be removed when they reach our sewage treatment works.

Across Hafren Dyfrdwy and the broader Severn Trent region, each year we remove over 45,000 blockages from our sewers across our region, around 70% of which were caused by the wrong things being flushed or poured down the sink, at a cost of over £10 million. In addition to this we remove multiple skips full of products including wet wipes, cotton buds and sanitary products from the inlet screens at our sewage treatment works.



We have an ongoing campaign to educate our customers on how they can help avoid [blocked drains and sewer pipes](#). As part of this we advise customers that only the 3Ps (paper, pee and poo) and wet wipes with the Fine 2 Flush mark on their packaging can be safely flushed down the loo with everything else put in the bin.

Although we have an established Fine to Flush standard that many products meet, there is a significant ongoing impact on our sewer network of those products that do not meet the standard. We would welcome for the standard to be made mandatory for all toilet and baby wipes, and for plastic to be removed from all single-use wipes and sanitary products.

If it would be helpful, I'd be happy to discuss the issue of plastic wet wipes with the Committee.