

From: [withheld]
To: [WaterReformPublicConsultation](#)
Subject: Rivers are for swimming
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We need strong rules that protect our rivers and lakes [and wetlands] and ensure that they are safe for swimming. The proposed changes are inadequate and with too long a time frame.

Ensuring rivers and lakes are clean enough to swim in should be a compulsory standard, not optional. Polluters should be faced with financial strictures that make it more profitable not to pollute - this is the only effective option, as proven overseas eg the UK rivers clean-up.

Too many recognised water quality indicators are missing. If councils don't have to monitor these indicators then we don't get an accurate understanding of the state of our waterways.

The rules should ensure:

- * water clarity and periphyton cover (a measure of how much algae, bacteria and detritus is covering the river bed) are monitored, to ensure our rivers are safe for swimming;
- * monitoring of aquatic insects to ensure our rivers are healthy;
- * there is a limit on both problem pollutants nitrogen and phosphorus so they don't cause nuisance algal growth; and
- * a limit on sediment to ensure our rivers are healthy.

Any exemptions to the rules should be limited to a list of specific water bodies.

One certain way to help protect our rivers is to ensure that we look after them and that the water is clean enough for swimming, not just wading or boating. Human health and our economy depend on safeguarding our environment. In his book 'Collapse' Jared Diamond shows how successive societies have failed and disappeared in the past through the over exploitation of finite resources to feed the aggrandisement of elite groups.

Mike Dee