Feargal Sharkey leads a call for clean water and invites outraged public to join him on November 3rd. Stephen Fry narrates film to get “Britain’s waters off life support”

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Feargal Sharkey outside Cardiff's Civil Justice Centre supporting a landmark legal case pursued by River Action against the Environment Agency and DEFRA. © PA Media/ River Action UK.

A coalition of the concerned are calling on everyone in the country angry at the state of water to join us to demand that our new government takes urgent action to address the UK's alarming and dangerous water pollution crisis by marching through Central London on Sunday 3rd November.

The March for Clean Water, which is timed to mark the end of the first 100 days of the new government, when environmental campaigners will be watching closely for financial commitments to protect the environment, will involve scores of participating groups and well-known personalities, including river campaigner Feargal Sharkey.

They invite the public to join in one simple demand of Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer: **to take immediate and decisive action to end the poisoning of our rivers, lakes and seas** by the lethal cocktail of raw sewage, agricultural waste and other chemical pollutants, that over recent years have been allowed to leave most of our waterways so filthy that they present major risks to human health and untold damage to nature.

This must include:

- a plan to address the continuous illegal dumping of raw sewage by the water companies;
- a full set of solutions to end all other major sources of water pollution;
- the reform of our failed regulatory system, including Ofwat and the Environment Agency, so

the law can be effectively enforced against polluters

We urge everyone who cares about clean water to unite and march through central London to Parliament Square on Sunday 3rd November. The march is inclusive, accessible, step free and everyone is welcome to join. **Marchers are encouraged to wear blue to symbolise clean water**; to let their creativity run free and bring noise, placards, puppets, posters, banners, costumes, marching bands and musical instruments.

Whilst the introduction of a Water Bill in the King's Speech on 17th July is welcome, the proposed initiatives revealed so far to improve water quality are not nearly extensive enough to address the scale of the UK's water pollution crisis. It is therefore essential that this prospective legislation includes a comprehensive set of measures to end all causes of water pollution and to do so now.

The March for Clean Water is coordinated by River Action and Feargal Sharkey in close collaboration with Surfers Against Sewage and major charities and governing bodies including the Clean Water Sports Alliance, British Rowing, British Canoeing, Greenpeace, RSPB, The Women's Institute, The Wildlife Trusts, Angling Trust, SOS Whitstable, Wildlife and Countryside Link, The Rivers Trust, Ilkley Clean River Group, Soil Association, Windrush Against Sewage Pollution and many local community groups from across the country.

Quote from River Campaigner Feargal Sharkey:

"We call on the Government to end the environmental devastation being inflicted upon our rivers, lakes and seas. It stops here, it stops today, it stops now. End pollution, end polluting for profit. Government must order an urgent root and branch review of the failed oversight and regulation of the water industry. It is now time to hold to account those industries that for too long now have been allowed to knowingly and wantonly pollute our waters driven by nothing more than profit and greed. We call on everyone in the country who is concerned or angry at the state of our waters to join us and march."

Quote from Chair and Founder of River Action, Charles Watson:

"The initial noises coming out of our new government regarding cleaning up our filthy waterways, whilst encouraging, do not nearly go far enough to deal with the scale of the problem they have inherited. Nothing short of wholescale reform of our failed regulatory system and comprehensive strategies to address all major sources of pollution, including sewage discharges and agricultural run-off, will suffice. On the 3rd November the public will make this point very clear to Sir Keir Starmer in no uncertain terms."

Background to the UK's water pollution crisis can be found in this hard-hitting short film **narrated by Stephen Fry.**

For more information about attending the March for Clean Water visit marchforcleanwater.org

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For media interviews call Ian at River Action on 07377 547 362 or email media@riveractionuk.com

Notes to editors

The March for Clean Water is on Sunday 3rd November. It will be a legal, peaceful, family-friendly and inclusive demonstration to send a simple message to the newly elected Labour Government: **it is your job to end the poisoning of our rivers, lakes and seas**. The march is planned to assemble at a central London location and will end at Parliament Square. **Timings will be confirmed in the run up to the event.**

River Action is an environmental charity on a mission to rescue Britain's rivers from the deluge of pollution that has left the majority of our waterways in a severely degraded ecological condition. Our campaigns to date have focussed on tackling the severe environmental crises created by both sewage and agricultural pollution.