

Respondent details

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Put a cross in this box if you are requesting non-disclosure of your response. <input type="checkbox"/>			

This first section of the response form seeks your views on the proposals incorporated in the main body of the consultation document and annexes.

1. OVERALL CHARGE INCREASES

Water UK welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposed 2010/11 charging schemes by the EA. We note that while the main document refers to Charging for Discharges and Water Abstraction, the proposals are included for information only. However we consider that there are fundamental aspects in the consultation that impact these two activities for our sector and therefore merit comment as follows:

Charges for Discharges

We welcome the constructive engagement on Charges for Discharges and related Operator Self Monitoring. To ensure the better regulation is truly achieved we will encourage best use of resources ensuring that duplication of efforts are avoided and processes are not excessive.

It will be helpful to have early discussions on OPRA UCF scheme as these could have significant implications for water industry's budgetary planning for 2011.

EIUC

The EA has previously provided indicative increases in EIUC for all regions for the next 5 years. We were therefore surprised and concerned at the lack of funding for the EIUC in the PR09 final determination by Ofwat. A notified item is not satisfactory as it won't breach materiality thresholds for most companies but will result in substantial costs beyond 2010 and there is likely to be no mechanism for logging-up these operating costs.

We view this as an emerging statutory obligation that is unfunded. This is unacceptable and we expect that two of the industry's key regulators work together and implement the principles of better regulation. In the absence of any agreement, we expect the EIUC element of abstraction charges to be suspended until the EA has properly defined the sustainability changes required to implement the RSA programme for water company licences.

Other specific Comments

We would like clarity on the difference on the Standard Rules Application fee (e.g £1590) and Bespoke permit (approx £9000) in relation to sludge treatment, particularly as the only difference is the proximity to protected sites while the content of the two permits remain effectively the same. It is unclear how the two permits should attract such a wide range of costs.

a) Baseline increases to charges

In the light of the current economic climate we have restricted the proposed baseline increase to 1%. Do you have any comments on this proposed increase in charges?

Comments:

Given the general pressure on cost reduction and salary freeze we believe the EA could offer a further reduction in the baseline cost for all its charges.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING (EP) SCHEME

(Annex A)

Application charge for permits based on standard rules

(Annex A section 3)

- a) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the application charge from £2,570 to £1,590 for the majority of our standard rule permits?

Comments:

We welcome the reduction.

- b) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the application charge from £2,570 to £700 for all waste mobile plant?

Comments:

We welcome the reduction.

Other fixed charges for new applications

(Annex A section 3)

- c) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the application charge from £2,880 to £2,570 for low impact installations?

Comments:

We welcome the reduction.

Transfer charge for tier 2 waste facilities

(Annex A section 3)

- d) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the transfer charge for simple waste facilities from £1,010 to £950?

Comments:

We welcome the reduction.

Surrender charge for tier 2 waste activities

(Annex A section 3)

- e) Do you have any comments on our proposal that surrender made by notification, as defined in the EP Regulations, will be free of charge?

Comments:

We welcome the change.

- f) Do you have any comments on our proposal for a reduced charge from £3,500 to £1,500 where the new simple surrender process is applied?

Comments:

We welcome the reduction.

- g) Do you have any comments on our proposal for a free surrender of standard permits with a short life, with no pro-rata of subsistence charges?

Comments:

We welcome the proposal.

Charges for mining waste

(Annex A section 3)

- h) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce application charge from £2,570 to £950 for inert mining waste permits?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- i) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the variation charge from £1,910 to £950?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- j) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the application charge from £2,880 to £2,570 for non-inert mining waste operations?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- k) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the transfer charge for simple mining waste operations from £1,010 to £950?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- l) Do you have any comments on our proposal to reduce the surrender charge from £3,500 to £1,500 for the new simple surrender process?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- m) Do you have any comments on our proposal to increase the transfer charge for higher risk mining waste operations from £1,953 to £4,850 to more accurately reflect the level of regulation required?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

- n) Do you have any comments on our proposal to increase the part-transfer charge for higher risk mining waste operations from £2,920 to £7,270 to more accurately reflect the level of regulation required?

Comments:

This proposal is not relevant to our sector.

Charges for closed landfills

(Annex A section 3)

- o) Do you have any comments on our proposal that the trigger for the variation charge to close a landfill should be the point when the Environment Agency are notified and agree, that the landfill has ceased to accept waste. It is not related to the Closure Notice being issued?

Comments:

No comment.

- p) Do you have any comments on our proposal that that where a landfill operator applies to accept inert waste at a closed site, a variation may be made which would cost the equivalent of a full application, based upon the Opra profile, as for a new permit?

Comments:

No comment.

Charges for the new non-standard facilities resulting from the Exemption Review

(Annex A section 3)

- q) Do you have any comments on our proposed charges for standard and non-standard facilities in tables 4 and 5 of the EP annex?

Comments:

We are awaiting your feedback to our response to your consultation on Standard Rules Consultation No 3, as it unclear how the EA intends to apply these rules to our sector. In particular your proposal for deployment form and mobile plants for land spreading and how it applies to our operations are currently not known. The proposal could increase the cost associated with it and act as a barrier to recovery activities. If Standard Rules Nr 14 and 15 are a replacement for existing paragraph 9 Exemption then the proposed cost to our operations is about 300%.

Other proposed changes

(Annex A section 3)

- r) Do you have any comments on our proposed amendment to the financial provision arrangements?

Comments:

No comment.

- s) Do you have any comments on our proposal regarding the complexity band for surface treating metals and plastic materials (2.3 part A (1)(a) where we propose reverting from band B to the previous mechanism of having only band A for surface treatment activities?

Comments:

No comment.

- t) Do you have any comments on our proposal to charge for pre-application advice for standard permits after the first hour?

Comments:

No comment.

- u) Do you have any comments on our proposal to introduce Compliance Band F with the associated 300% impact upon the base subsistence charge, (and Opra profile for installations), from April 2010 using the same approach as set out in our consultation last year?

Comments:

No comment.

3. PROPOSED CHANGES TO GROUND WATER CHARGES

(Annex B)

- a) Do you have any comments on our proposal to migrate groundwater charges into the Unified Charging Framework, together with the associated charges?

Comments:

No comment.

- b) Do you have any comments on our proposal to introduce a new standard permit for disposing of enzyme-treated sheep dip with the associated charges?

Comments:
No comment.

- c) Do you have any comments on our proposals to apply Tier 3 Opra-based charges to large solid disposals?

Comments:
No comment.

4. PROPOSED CHANGES TO RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCE REGULATION CHARGES (Annex C)

- a) Do you have any comments on our proposal to migrate radioactive substances into the Unified Charging Framework, together with the associated charges?

Comments:
No comment.

- b) Do you have any comments on our proposal to introduce a new application charge based on time and materials for high volume, very low level radioactive waste?

Comments:
No comment.

5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO EU EMISSIONS TRADING SCHEME CHARGES (Annex D)

- a) Do you have any comments on our proposal to introduce charging for Aviators in line with the current suite of charges in place for EU ETS?

Comments:

The remainder of this response document seeks your comments on charges communication:

- 6. If you wanted to find out something about charges where would be the first place you would go or who would you contact?**

Environment Agency website

National Customer Contact
Centre
Site inspector
Area office
Trade association
Other (please specify)

Comments:

7. What information on charges are you interested in?

Charging scheme
Charging scheme guidance
Leaflet explaining any changes to the scheme
Details of how we calculate our charges for a particular scheme

X
X
X

Comments:

8. Would you like to be notified of developments/events in charges, e.g. consultations, new regulations/charges? If so how?

An email
Electronic newsletter
Text message (you may have to pay to receive this)

X

Comments:

We would like clarity on difference on the Standard Rules Application fee (£1590) and Bespoke permit (approx £9000) in relation to sludge treatment. The only difference is proximity to protected sites but the content of the permit is effective the same.