



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

6 March 2026

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to voice my support for Ham and Kingston Riverside to be designated Bathing Water Status.

This body of water is used by groups for recreational activities such as swimming, kayaking and paddleboarding, to name just a few, so it is vitally important that assurances regarding the water quality in this area can be provided.

The cleanliness of the water in this part of the Thames has been under intense scrutiny over the past several years as a result of Thames Water's 'Teddington Direct River Abstraction' proposal. This scheme would see 'treated effluent' pumped into the river above Teddington Lock by Ham Lands. While Thames Water have been evasive about the exact quality of this treated effluent, it will not be of bathing water quality. This, of course, raises significant concerns for local residents who use the river for recreational activities.

Therefore, not only will the designation help reduce the health risks for river users, it will also serve to hold Thames Water to account on their environmental responsibilities.

I have already made my thoughts on this project clear to the Environment Agency, and the least that the department can do is routinely check the quality of the water on the border of Ham and Kingston to provide health and safety assurances to river users.

Additionally, the local campaign group Save our Lands and River (SOLAR), who participated in Earthwatch's latest 'Great UK Water Blitz', found that of the 35 samples the group took recently between Sunbury Lock and Kew Bridge, 31 showed that the River Thames had 'poor' ecological status based on nitrate and phosphorous levels - this included stretches of the river around Ham and Kingston. This is just another concern for local river users.

The Thames is a resource that the UK should be proud of, and I cannot see a reason as to why Ham and Kingston Riverside should not be designated Bathing Water Status.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Olney".

Sarah Olney
Member of Parliament for Richmond Park