

Submission re Proposed Water Charges.

Q1. No. I believe that the terms of reference for this section of the CER document set by the Government are designed to avoid any real scrutiny of the labour cost base of this new entity. As a result the consumers are now being asked to pay for salary scales for employees which are not in line with industry norms in similar utilities in other jurisdictions. While this may be understandable in the context of the type of "sweetheart" deal that was completed with public sector unions to get them to move from local authorities rather than initiate a redundancy it is inexcusable that these type of salary levels will be continued for new employees for the future. CER should be demanding pay scales for new employees in Irish Water be in line with comparable staff in similar utilities in Northern Ireland, Wales, England and Scotland. If this policy was pursued we could expect a containment of charges to customers in the future.

Q38, 39, 40: I do not agree that this proposal goes nearly far enough to recognise the failure of Local Authorities previously (now Irish Water) to provide an adequate water supply for their customers. No one should ever have to pay anything for any commodity that is not "fit for purpose". Anybody with "Boil Notice" should not be charged. Anybody with a supply that is inadequate in terms of colour, taste or content should be entitled to a rebate or a refund. Water in [REDACTED] is full of lime and in many areas has a taste of chemicals from it. Many people cannot use it as drinking water and have large bills for bottled water and utensils have to be frequently changed because of the build-up of lime. This is unacceptable and should be taken into account in billing customers.

In [REDACTED] the water is frequently discoloured, is very "hard", has a bad taste and it requires filtering. Again the consumers should be compensated for it directly or through reduced charges.