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## Let's beat the drought together

Dear Customer

As Managing Director, I wanted to update you on the current drought and to ask for your help in **continuing to save as much water as possible**. Also, to explain **why there is a hosepipe ban** and what we are doing about leakage from our pipes.

We have just had two very dry winters in a row. During a normal winter the ground soaks up rain like a sponge. Over the summer this groundwater slowly feeds rivers and enables us to keep our reservoirs full with the water that we treat and supply to your taps.

This year, groundwater levels are exceptionally low, so a lot will depend on how much rain we get to top up the rivers. We can't predict this accurately, but April's rainfall was only a little over half what we would normally expect. The situation is serious and a few wet days won't be enough to make a difference. So it really is important that everyone uses water carefully, to ensure that we can provide enough for people's basic needs throughout the year, whatever the weather.

### Why is there a hosepipe ban and what does it cover?

We have not had to impose a hosepipe ban for 15 years and understand it is annoying and deeply inconvenient for many customers, and for gardeners in particular. But legally, a hosepipe ban is the first step we have to take to restrict non-essential water use during a drought. We are only allowed to ban the use of sprinklers and hoses to water private gardens and to wash private cars. But of course we want everyone to use as little water as possible, in the home and the garden, and I want to thank everyone who is already doing this.

### What happens next if we get a long, hot, dry summer?

If we continue to get low rainfall, without a significant reduction in water use, we will need to apply to the Government for a Drought Order, which would take about 6 weeks. If granted, this would give us the powers to limit water use for a much wider range of activities, such as washing buildings and filling private swimming pools, plus the watering of parks and sports pitches. The water saved would reduce the risk of much more serious restrictions being needed later in the year.