



Building a Hydro Nation

8 March 2010

Introduction

Friends of the Earth Scotland supports the Scottish Environment LINK response to consultation. This short response is additional to the Scottish Environment LINK response and focuses on the issue of Governance for which Scottish Environment LINK have no formal position.

The need for Scottish Water to remain in public hands

Across the globe, around 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe water, and 2.6 billion people do not have access to adequate sanitation.¹ The poor, especially in developing countries, suffer most from the effects of water shortages. In many developing countries, the majority of poor villages and urban slum areas are not served by a piped water system. Often, the poor must find alternative water sources in polluted rivers, lakes and shallow hand-dug wells.

As part of an international network with sister groups facing these challenges we believe that water is a human right; it is essential to sustain livelihoods, and should not be treated as an economic good. Water territories – from the source to the tap – must be protected and managed sustainably for the benefit of communities and biodiversity. ***We agree with the premise of the consultation that Scottish Water should remain in public hands.***

Public-Public Partnerships

We do however believe that water management could be improved through so called 'Public-Public Partnerships'. Public-Public Partnerships are new partnerships for the management of water services and provide one possible solution to water management.² These partnerships involve public water operators, communities, trade unions and others, who work together on a basis of equality and environmental sustainability. We believe such partnerships could improve community interest in - and community benefit from – Scotland's water resources (including renewable energy projects), increase environmental sustainability and provide a possible model moving forward.

Conclusion

Water is a human right. It should be kept as a public asset and managed for the benefit of Scotland's people and environment and contribute to global environmental sustainability. Public-public partnerships could help provide a possible model of sustainability.

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¹ <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/index.php?id=25>

² See for example, <http://www.waterjustice.org/campaign.php?componentID=6&articleID=67>