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## Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/05 04:06

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This thread discusses the Content article: Hands Off Our Water!

RE: 08 26 Privatisation of Scottish Water      Inbox X  
enquiries to me  
show details 12:24 PM (10 hours ago)

Reply

Dear Scunnert

Thank you for your e-mail. I have forwarded your correspondence onto the appropriate persons within the Commission. Our response time to enquiries is no more than 10 working days.

If we can help you any further, please let us know.

Kind regards

Martin Leitch  
Information Officer

-----Original Message-----

From: Scunnert  
Sent: 04 March 2008 17:03  
To: enquiries  
Subject: 08 2Privatisation of Scottish Water

I would like to be reassured that Scotland's water is not going to be designated a "good" under GATT and WTO rules. I would further wish to be reassured that bulk exports of Scottish water will never be approved.

Yours  
Scunnert

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Clare - 2008/03/05 10:00

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Hi Scunnert. I'm confused. Who did you send that to?

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/05 12:29

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Clare - The Water Commision

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/05 12:46

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RE: 08 26 Privatisation of Scottish Water      Inbox X  
enquiries

Dear Scunnert, Thank you for your e-mail. I have forwarded your corresponde...  
12:24 PM (19 hours ago)  
enquiries to me

show details 4:20 AM (3 hours ago)

Reply

Dear Scunnert,

Thank you for your email. The matters you raise are for the Scottish Government to determine, and not the Commission. You may wish to raise your query with the Scottish Government. I have attached a link to the area of their website that will be of relevance to you:

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/waterindustryscot>

This website also provides a contact e-mail address for you to contact the Scottish Government:

[waterdivision@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:waterdivision@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

I hope that this is of help to you.

Kind regards

Martin Leitch  
Information Officer

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/06 05:30

Water-This is how water is included in Trade Agreements:

{youtube}UdejOcCnmgo&feature=related{/youtube}

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/06 05:40

I like this guys attitude (hope the link works) If it doesn't go here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=96v2XTI64fw&feature=related>

{youtube}96v2XTI64fw&feature=related{/youtube}

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Clare - 2008/03/06 11:15

Scunnert, I agree with this guy who has responded to you. I would go direct to the Scottish Government on this. I saw the article you pasted into the Herald thread the other day and most of the things talked about didn't figure in the plans recently talked about for the future of our water so it was very puzzling. I've never heard of the "Water Commission" either and I'm thinking they must be yet another quango. Either way the big decisions on water won't be made by them but at Holyrood. I'm going to make some enquiries myself in that direction. Will let you know.

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/06 18:46

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Clare,  
the Water Industry Commission is the statutory regulator of rge industry and is well aware of the implications of the "partial deregulation" of the industry. Especially as they are the ones planning, and lobbying for complete privatisation. To pass the buck to the Government is disingenuous.

A very revealing and interesting report on the history, players, and motivations behind the legislation re: Scottish Water can be downloaded here as a PDF file. It's 55 pages long but worth the read.

<http://72.14.205.104/search?q=cache:Hx7TgRg6XasJ:www.stuc.org.uk/files/e-brief%2520nov%25202006/Waterreportfinal.pdf+privatisation+of+scottish+water&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=14&gl=ca>

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/06 19:03

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Clare,

please disregard that horrendous url - here's a tiny replacement.

[tinyurl.com/2em9au](http://tinyurl.com/2em9au)

The WIC is, as I've said before, the statutory regulator and has been the biggest proponent of privatising the industry. Please read this report - it's revealing. I'll try attaching the file - never done it before - see if it works?

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Clare - 2008/03/06 23:39

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Hi Scunnert

Thanks for the info. I will have a read. Ah, the regulator? Hm. Well, bear in mind that regulator or not, they don't have powers to change anything only Holyrood can, and they need to have OUR blessing to do it. I would bet a year's salary that there is no way the Scottish people will ever give their consent to start messing with our water. I think as many of us as possible should write to our MSPs just to give them a wee reminder about that.

Thanks again Scunnert

C

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/07 00:00

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Clare,  
I'm afraid the legislation has been in place since 2005. All the talk re: mutualisation was just a smoke screen covering for what was really going on - privatisation. What galls is that the SNP had to know this and have been playing along.

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Clare - 2008/03/09 14:14

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Scunnert, I think you must have misunderstood something. Our water is not up for privatisation and I can't accept either that the SNP would have known about this and played along. Its unthinkable. We had a referendum here some years

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back where 97% opposed any form of privatisation. The Tories were in power at the time and English Water was being privatised. The referendum was conducted by Strathclyde Regional Council and it sent a very powerful message to the Tories. There is no way any political Party would risk messing with that level of opinion, not even Parties at Holyrood. They would be crucified. I will however take on board what you have said and will now write myself to the Scottish Government direct asking them to clarify their position.

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/09 20:15

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Clare, I accept that I may have misunderstood something and yes SNP collusion is unthinkable. Let's hope you're right. However, my reading so far indicates that the "partial-deregulation" was done with the intent of opening up Scottish Water to corporate participation. Worryingly, once this has been done the principle of irreversibility under GATS is triggered. I assume this was the reason for the undisguised glee with which the recent announcement by Scottish Water of "competition" within the commercial market was greeted.

However, as you say - I may have misunderstood something. I have been trying to track down the UK's schedule of commitments under GATS with limited success. As far as I can make out they are listed under the European Communities schedule on the WTO site but these listings are confusing and don't appear to be comprehensive. Further, as commitments may be open (unrestricted) or unbound (restrictions apply) through 4 different modes of supply for each member nation and, as the entries have no subject index, it's frustrating to say the least.

Yes - perhaps i'm misunderstanding something.

From:

[http://www.citizen.org/documents/Gats\\_Backgrounder.pdf](http://www.citizen.org/documents/Gats_Backgrounder.pdf) -

Another common line of GATS' defenders is that the GATS rules explicitly exclude all public services. It is hard to imagine a public service that actually would qualify under this exclusion. There is a provision in the GATS (Article 1.3) stating that certain government-provided services are excluded, but the provision is written in such a way that it only applies to government services which are provided neither on a "commercial basis" nor "in competition with one or more service suppliers." -

As can be understood from the above, Scottish Water would no longer qualify for exclusion from GATS as competition has been introduced. It really seems to me that we have lost this one but again, I could be misunderstanding something. I'm still waiting for a response from the Government to an e-mail sent on Mrch 5, and will let you know what their response was.

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Clare - 2008/03/10 00:02

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Hi Scunnert

I've sent some emails too to the Scottish Government site on Water and to Alex Neil.

I'm thinking here about the reception you got when you first mentioned this issue on the Herald site actually with people attacking you for being "negative" towards the SNP. No one seemed to want to investigate what you were telling us at the time. That shocked me actually. Water is a subject I'm quite passionate about having been very involved in the original campaign when the Tories were trying to privatise ours back then. I think our water here in Scotland has the potential to play a major role in energy. I've seen the schemes already in place and they are amazing. There is great scope for expanding there and for export too of course but the benefits would be for Scotland, not for private owners. I'm alarmed that the info you've found isn't being publicised so all the more reason for people to follow it up via MSPs. I am positive if ordinary people get an inkling that this is afoot there will be hell to pay and it will get stopped dead in its tracks. Hopefully tho, our fears are unfounded.

C

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by Alex McG - 2008/03/20 19:32

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Hi Clare & Scunnert,

I've read through this thread and I'm horrified that there should even be a suggestion of privatising Scottish water. The English experience should have shown that this is a retrograde step! I note that you have both entered into correspondence on this but hav you had and replies?

Alex

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/21 04:06

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Alex - I emailed the ScotGov on this on the fifth of the month and am still waiting for a reply. I will email them again on the 25th if I still haven't received a reply. However, it seems pretty clear that we have lost control of this resource.

Interestingly - my reading so far is that we didn't have a choice - the EU mandated these changes. I suspect that the Scottish Government - cognisant of their enfeebled capacity on issues of international relations, treaties, and obligation - have simply decided to ignore it as they have no power to change it.

Indeed, as it is the stated policy of the SNP to retain membership within the EU it would be self defeating to oppose these changes. And it confirms my views regarding Alex Salmonds economics. His future Scotland, i believe, is one that is closely integrated into the global corporate adventure.

In the international poker game of politics and big business,however, you couldn't actually say Alex has a weak hand - he has no hand at all as he doesn't have a seat at the table. Authority rests with Westminster and Brussels while Holyrood has very little power - we have very little power. My fear is that there will be little left under our control once we get independence, for our freedom of action will have been negotiated or mandated away for years to come - in some cases in perpetuity.

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/31 14:27

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Dear Scunnert

Thank you for your email of 5 March 2008.

This division of the Scottish Government handles the relationship between Scottish Ministers, as owners of Scottish Water on behalf of the people of Scotland, and Scottish Water as providers of mains water and sewerage services in Scotland. Scottish Water has not sold water to any other country and has no plans at present to provide water services outside Scotland.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Hunter  
Policy Officer - Communications  
Scottish Government  
Water Industry Team  
1-H Dock Side  
Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh  
EH6 6QQ

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## Re:Hands Off Our Water!

Posted by scunnert - 2008/03/31 14:40

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This response from Graeme Hunter gives me no comfort. He writes:

"Scottish Water has not sold water to any other country and has no plans at present to provide water services outside Scotland."

Fair enough - but what about Satec, Aquavitae and Osprey Water Services?

Do they have any plans in this direction and could the Scottish Government restrict such trade? Consider a case in New Hampshire.

<http://www.afsc.org/newengland/nh/springs-trade.pdf>

Since my original email specifically asked about the status of out water vis - a - vis international trading agreements I find it strange that no mention is made of this in Mr Hunter's reply.

I will try again - perhaps if I bug these people enough I will get the reassurance we all want.

Interestingly, the Sunday Herald ran an article "Liquid Assets" the final sentences I copy here:

"... it will not be until everyone from regulator to customer sees the results that we know whether the liberation has been successful. If so, the market is expected to follow the likes of gas and electricity and scrap the fixed tariffs to move to free competition - a move that the Scottish regulator has said will not happen before 2014 at the earliest.

With the next question being the domestic market, and the issue of whether a Scottish government would privatise Scottish Water also in the background, the drips of change on Tuesday could well be followed by a flood.

Don't be surprised if the future is increasingly wet."

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