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PRESS RELEASE

Water Forum response to Irish Water's Water Conservation Order in South Cork

Today, Irish Water have issued a Water Conservation Order (hosepipe ban) for four weeks in 30 water supply zones in southwest Cork. This follows an extended period of warm and dry weather that increased household and agricultural demand along with additional seasonal demand from tourists. For weeks, Irish Water have been carefully monitoring 60 water resources zones in Cork, Kerry and Limerick tankering in water to maintain supply to homes and businesses where it is needed.

Last week, the Water Forum made a [submission](#) to Irish Water's public consultation on the draft Southwest Regional Water Resources Plan. The draft plan noted that the population of this region is expected to increase by 33% by 2040 and with climate change impacts potentially worsening, more severe droughts are likely in years to come. Significant capital investment is required to provide the infrastructural improvements needed for water supply and wastewater treatment to minimise impacts on the environmental condition of the waterbodies where the supplies are sourced.

The Water Forum believe that, in addition to addressing infrastructure requirements, demand management in the form of water conservation measures has to become a key part of water supply strategy. *Future proofing supply* to minimise future risk is essential to meet the needs of businesses and communities. The Water Forum recommends that Irish Water develop *Drought Management plans* for each Water Resource Zone (WRZ) and these should be made publicly available. *Water availability* also needs to be a key factor in development planning and all responsible agencies need to work together to maximise efficiencies in water supply and demand for improved environmental outcomes. There needs to be clarity and transparency in development planning to support economic and population growth.

In addition, a *proactive approach* to increase awareness of water scarcity and drought in Ireland is needed. [Research](#) commissioned by the Water Forum identified the need for an improved bottom-up understanding of water (from the processes that underpin treatment and supply, to the energy and resources required to produce drinking water). The Water Forum is currently working with agencies and stakeholders to develop awareness of the need for water conservation and is calling for the development of a Government-led national framework for water conservation.

The hosepipe ban prohibits the use of garden hosepipes and other non-essential uses of water by domestic users and commercial premises for non-commercial activities, for example watering gardens attached to a business premises. The Water Forum believe water conservation measures should become part of everyday life in Ireland and the have produced an [infographic](#) showing easy ways to save water and the energy benefits of doing so.

End

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Note to the Editor

The Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) was established in 2018 to provide a platform for public engagement on all matters relating to water management in Ireland and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. It consists of 25 members including representatives from a wide range of organisations and sectors with an interest in water issues that includes the environmental sector, the rural and agricultural sector, consumers including customers of Irish Water, the rural water sector, rivers trusts, angling, business sector, trade unions, the community and voluntary sector, fisheries, forestry, education, social housing and tourism. In accordance with the Water Services Act, 2017, the Forum has advisory roles in relation to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Irish Water (IW), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and the Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC). The Forum is chaired by Dr Matt Crowe.

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