

Civic Offices, Limerick Road  
Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

e: [info@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:info@nationalwaterforum.ie)

w: [www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)



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## **Water efficiency measures are essential while we wait on the Eastern Midlands Water Supply Project**

The Government today has approved Uisce Eireann to proceed with planning for the Eastern Midlands Water Supply Project. This work aims to secure water supply to nearly 50% of Ireland's population through the Eastern and Midlands regions including the Greater Dublin Area.

The Water Forum has long called out the need to build resilience in the drinking water supply to the Greater Dublin Region. The population of this region is increasing faster than other areas of the country, coupled with increasing economic development, resulting in increasing demands for drinking and wastewater services. Meanwhile, over 85% of the water supply needed for the Dublin area comes from the River Liffey, equivalent to 40% of its flow. This results in very little spare capacity for water supply for the region.

The Water Supply project for the Eastern and Midlands region was approved by the Minister today and will go to An Bord Pleanála for planning permission in 2025. While Uisce Eireann gives no timeline for completion of the project is it likely to take up to 10 years. The 2022 census recorded a population increase of approximately 2% in the eastern midlands region which is one of the fastest growing areas. If such rates continue over the next 10 years the stress on water supplies will continue to increase, a situation potentially further exacerbated by increasing temperatures and drought owing to climate change impacts.

The Water Forum has recommended that the Government substantially increases its efforts to improve water conservation, i.e. using and wasting less water. This will require initiatives from education and communications to water efficiency measures (fittings and appliances) in all new builds as a way to reduce the growing pressure on water supply over the coming years and decades. With plans to build over 30k new homes each year for the next ten years, significant water savings could be made with resulting reductions in drinking water supply costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

Dr Matt Crowe, Chairperson of the Water Forum stated: *'A recent water consumer survey completed by the Water Forum showed that 74% of people supported water conservation measures but did not know how to go about it. There is great opportunity to engage with people to build knowledge and awareness on how to improve water efficiency in our every day lives'*

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### *Note to the Editor*

The Water Forum (An Fóram Uisce) was established in 2018 to provide a platform for stakeholder engagement on all matters relating to water management in Ireland and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive. It consists of 26 members from a wide range of organisations and sectors with an interest in water issues, including agriculture, angling, business, community and voluntary sector, domestic water consumers, education, environment, fisheries, forestry, recreation, rivers trusts, rural water, social housing, tourism, trade unions and youth.

In accordance with the Water Services Act 2017, the Forum's statutory function is to advise the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Uisce Éireann, (UÉ), the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) and the Water Policy Advisory Committee (WPAC) in relation to water management and the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan and the Water Framework Directive.

The Forum is chaired by Dr Matt Crowe.

Contact: [gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie](mailto:gretta@nationalwaterforum.ie)

[www.thewaterforum.ie](http://www.thewaterforum.ie)

Twitter: [@anforamuisce](https://twitter.com/anforamuisce)

