

Department of the Taoiseach,
Government Buildings,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2,
D02 R583

Dear Mr Varadkar,

It is with great urgency that we write to you.

It has been reported recently in the news that the Attorney General has been granted permission by the Cabinet to draft amendments to the Constitution, with a view to holding a referendum regarding the ownership of water services.

As a citizen and a registered voter I would like to *very firmly state our support of a referendum putting this question to the people of Ireland*. This issue is serious and needs to be decided by the people of Ireland, so that we can influence our own future.

It is true that there are many issues facing us as a country, some far more immediate in nature than having enough water. However we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are responsible for securing our future needs *now* also.

Our natural resources must not come into private ownership. Unfortunately in the past, we have made that mistake already. It has seemed prudent to those in control to sell the rights to our natural resources, for example Gas and Oil which are invaluable for the production of energy in its various forms. However water is the most valuable resource as it is necessary for basic living, food production and the maintenance of clean living conditions. The constitution is the most direct way to protect this resource in the future. There are substitutes for Gas and Oil. There is none for water. That is why it needs be put to a referendum.

During the summer Ireland experienced a drought, and it was an inconvenience for some but very difficult for others such as our farming community. This was only from several weeks of dry weather. Had water been a privatised commodity the situation could have been far graver indeed.

If the referendum is passed, securing the ownership of water in public hands protects not only the citizens of Ireland, the businesses and economy of Ireland but also the politicians of Ireland. There can be no overtures made about the buying of water rights if the rights are shared amongst the people. This shared ownership does not prevent any charges that future governments may find it necessary to levy for the supply of water. It simply ensures that the Irish people cannot have their water sold to the highest bidder. Should the referendum fail, this scenario would at least have been the result of a democratic process.

Yours Sincerely