

# NEWS RELEASE



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If you would like to arrange interviews with the MPs organising the parliamentary briefing, Ed Vaizey MP or Nicola Blackwood MP, please contact GARD on 07917 312 749.

## **MPs warn of £1 billion reservoir cost to be paid by Thames Water consumers**

Campaigners are assembling in Parliament on 9 June to brief MPs on the £1 billion cost to consumers of Thames Water's proposed reservoir near Abingdon.

Ahead of a public inquiry starting on 15 June, GARD is meeting new and returning MPs and their advisors to put forward more efficient, less costly alternatives to the nine-year reservoir construction plan. MPs will hear that consumers in the South East and London will pick up the bill for the reservoir, which Thames Water has repeatedly failed to identify a need for.

Local MP, minister and sponsor of the event, Ed Vaizey said:

"I have been involved with the reservoir campaign for more than seven years, as both a candidate and MP. I secured a debate in Parliament on the issue, and as a result also secured a public inquiry which will take place in June. I have always maintained that Thames Water must be held to account and its plans scrutinised. There are perfectly viable alternatives to a reservoir, as well as clear ways to reduce water consumption so that a reservoir is not necessary. In recent years Thames Water has delayed its proposed start date for the reservoir, as well as reduced its size, which I think indicates that its plans are not as essential as it would have us believe, which further weakens their case."

Nick Thompson, Chairman of GARD said,

"It's very important MPs understand the scale and impact of what's proposed. There is no need for the reservoir as there are other ways of securing new water supplies which are not being properly considered. The billion pound cost of the proposed reservoir will be passed on to consumers, just when they can least afford it, at the same time that the profits are passed back to Thames Water's parent company in Australia."

## **ENDS**

For more information or to arrange an interview with Nick Thompson please contact Peter Jones on 07917 312 749.

About GARD:

1. The Group Against Reservoir Development (GARD) is a campaign group opposed to Thames Water's plans to build a huge and unnecessary reservoir in the countryside,

south west of Abingdon. Thames Water has ignored or dismissed more sustainable and viable long term alternatives. The campaign has the support of parliamentarians, district and county councillors from all parties, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and local residents.

2. Local residents can sign up to our campaign via our website and make their voice heard. Campaign updates are available via Facebook, Twitter and the website. Go to [www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk](http://www.abingdonreservoir.org.uk)
3. A public inquiry on Thames Water's plan is due to start on 15 June this year and GARD will be challenging the plans at the inquiry. If Thames Water's plan is approved in the face of strong local opposition, work could start as early as 2016.
4. An event will be hosted in Parliament on 9 June in order to brief parliamentarians on the proposals and the potential alternatives.