# Water bills in England rise by £123 amid criticism of Ofwat



From today, water bills across England are set to increase, with customers facing an average rise of £123 annually. The decision, made by the water regulator Ofwat, has garnered criticism from various campaign groups, particularly River Action, which has levelled accusations that the regulator is enabling customers to bear the cost of long-standing neglect within the water industry.

Emma Dearnerly, head of legal and policy at River Action, has voiced concerns over the current regulatory framework, stating, “We need a root and branch reform of the failing water sector and its regulators to prevent water companies from prioritising profits over customers and river health.” Speaking to the Express, Dearnerly further emphasised the need for immediate changes, criticising Ofwat’s reliance on “modeled data instead of reality,” and reiterated the importance of ensuring regulators uphold their promises regarding customer payments. She expressed the necessity for the costs associated with repairing the deteriorating water infrastructure to be shouldered by the water companies and their investors rather than burdens placed upon the UK public.

River Action's legal challenge against Ofwat coincides with the bill increases, underlining their assertion that the latest price review will compel customers to pay twice for inadequate infrastructure. This assertion is supported by disturbing data published by the Environment Agency, revealing that water companies discharged raw sewage into the country’s seas and rivers for a record duration of 3.61 million hours in 2024.

The implications of escalating water bills invite scrutiny over the operational efficiencies and financial stewardship of water companies, as well as the regulatory practices enforced by Ofwat. The challenge raised by River Action aims to address what they term as “systemic issues” within the governance of the water sector.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.which.co.uk/news/article/water-bill-price-hikes-how-to-save-money-aVpp31O3Ihzl> - This article confirms that water bills in England and Wales are set to rise by £123 annually, primarily to fund infrastructure upgrades and improve environmental practices. The increase varies by region, reflecting different operational needs and regulatory actions.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/april-bills-go-up-energy-water-council-tax-b2724036.html> - This source further details the average increase in water bills across the UK, noting regional variations and the role of Ofwat in setting these price increases. It highlights the impact on household finances as various bills rise simultaneously.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency> - The Environment Agency is responsible for publishing data related to environmental issues, such as sewage discharges. While not directly linked in the search results, this website would provide relevant information on such discharges and related regulatory actions.
* <https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/price-reviews/pr19/pr19-technical-appendices/> - Ofwat's price review process and the underlying technical appendices provide insights into how water prices are determined and the rationale behind recent increases to fund infrastructure and environmental improvements.
* <https://www.riveraction.org.uk/> - River Action's website outlines their campaigns against water pollution and their efforts to reform the regulatory framework of the water sector. This includes legal challenges to Ofwat's policies and advocacy for customer and environmental protections.