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On Thursday 13 July 2017, during the debate on Deregulation: Public Services and Health and Safety, it has been brought to my attention that in error I inadvertently provided incorrect information, and I apologise for this.

Namely I refer the noble Lords to Official Report, column 1333, when I stated that "the Thames tideway project will remove 60 million litres of raw sewage out of the Thames, and we can do that both in or outside Europe" this was not the case.

In actuality, I should have specified that the Thames Tideway Tunnel project will remove almost all of the 18 million tonnes of sewage that typically overflows into the River Thames in central London in a year, and we can do that both in or outside Europe.

For a number of years now, sewage pollution in the Thames Estuary has been a problem with some 39 million tonnes overflowing from the sewers in a typical year. The Thames Tideway Improvement Scheme is addressing the problem and consists of three elements: the Lee Tunnel (operational since January 2016) has captured the 16 million tonnes of sewage that typically overflowed per year from the Abbey Mills Pumping Station into the River Lee (which joins the Thames Estuary), major upgrades to the five main London sewage treatment works (completed in 2014) have captured the 5 million tonnes per year that typically spilled from them into the Thames, and the Thames Tideway Tunnel (now under construction) will capture almost all of the remaining 18 million tonnes per year from the sewer overflows along the Thames through central London once that is completed in 2023.

It is anticipated that there may still be three or four sewer overflows per year on average in the heaviest rainfall events after the Thames Tideway Tunnel becomes operational, amounting to about 2.5 million tonnes, but this will be predominantly surface water run-off with very little raw sewage content (that having been already captured by the Tunnel), and will have a negligible environmental impact.

I hope that this provides suitable clarity, and once again I apologise for this mistake. I will be placing a copy of this letter in the Libraries of the House.

DAVID PRIOR