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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**2017 No. 81**

The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

PART 5

Environmental Objectives and Programme of Measures

**Setting less stringent objectives**

17.—(1) Less stringent environmental objectives than those required by regulation 13(2)(b) or (c), (4), (5)(c) or (6) may be set for a specific body of water where—

- (a) that body of water is so affected by human activity or its natural condition is such that the achievement of the environmental objectives set would not be feasible or would be disproportionately expensive; and
- (b) all the conditions in paragraphs (2) to (5) are or will be met.

(2) The environmental and socio-economic needs served by such human activity cannot be achieved by other means which are a significantly better environmental option not entailing disproportionate costs.

(3) Where the specific body of water is a body of surface water, the highest ecological and chemical status possible is achieved, given impacts that could not reasonably have been avoided due to the nature of the human activity or pollution.

(4) Where the specific body of water is a body of groundwater, the least possible changes to good groundwater status is ensured, given impacts that could not reasonably have been avoided due to the nature of the human activity or pollution.

(5) No further deterioration occurs in the status of the affected body of water.

(6) The establishment of a less stringent environmental objective, and the reasons for it, must be set out in the relevant river basin management plan.

(7) The review of the less stringent environmental objectives in accordance with regulation 12(3) must include consideration of whether a more stringent objective should be set.