

Federal Law Mooted to Protect Water

08 April 2009

ABU DHABI – The Ministry of Environment and Water is preparing a federal draft law to protect and conserve water resources.

This was announced by Dr Rashid Ahmed bin Fahad, Minister of Environment and Water, during the Federal National Council (FNC) session on Tuesday. He said the new law aims at protecting groundwater and other sources of water from abuse, particularly water bottling plants, which draw groundwater thus depleting water resources.

Dr Fahad said the law, for the first time, will provide a legal framework for the organization and management of water to protect water resources in the country.

The legislation will impose penalties against those who waste or misuse water. The Minister was answering a question submitted by FNC member Dr Sultan Al Muazen on the action being taken by the Ministry for the preservation of water resources in the country.

Dr Al Muazen has also asked about the measures being taken by the ministry to meet the ongoing depletion of underground water in the presence of a large number of water bottling companies, and about the procedures adopted by the Ministry to ensure that bottled water is healthy and free from impurities.

The Minister said, "Agriculture consumes 79% of the sub terrain water while domestic and industrial uses of this water are only 3%."

The Minister said that the water bottling plants are subjected to the control of municipal services and local economic departments. The Ministry is seeking to develop agricultural policies to regulate the demand for water, he said. The Ministry is also seeking the development of groundwater sources and the development of 114 dams to preserve rainwater, he said.