

## AIR PASSENGER DUTY INCREASES

As you may be aware, in this year's Budget, the Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP announced that he will press ahead with his plan to restructure APD from November 2009, with charges increasing significantly the following year. The Government has attempted to justify this increase as a 'green tax'; however the proposals do nothing to incentivise airlines to fly fuller flights, and little to encourage airlines to invest in newer more efficient aircrafts.

The Chancellor's proposed version of APD is also demonstrably unfair, because its charges are based on the distance from London to the capital city of the destination country, not the destination itself. This means, for example, that frequent flyers to popular holiday destinations such as the Caribbean will be forced to pay far more than those flying longer distances to airports in the western United States or eastern Russia.

Regrettably, it appears that the Government is simply employing this measure as a revenue raising scheme to try and shore up the lamentable state of public finances.

I fully understand concerns about the proposed changes. I believe that this is the wrong way to tackle the problems caused by carbon dioxide emissions and could put the UK economy at a disadvantage, raise the prospect of further job losses and further tax already hard-up individuals and families.

My colleagues in the Transport Team have consistently opposed these plans and pledged that, if elected, Conservatives will replace Air Passenger Duty, with an Air Pollution Duty, that charges airlines per plane rather than passengers per flight. We would also offer incentives to those who flew newer, cleaner planes.

I believe this would end the problems caused by the current system, which allows an empty plane to pay a small amount of APD despite emitting nearly the same amount of carbon dioxide as a full plane. It would also encourage airlines to invest in new, cleaner planes with fewer emissions.

I believe that this is a fair and sensible way to reduce emissions without restricting people's freedom to travel, and my colleagues and I will continue to push the Government to this end.



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