



The Voice of UK Airlines

Media Release

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For Immediate Use

Hands off our holiday, Mr Taxman!

New poll shows 3 out of 4 oppose hikes in flight tax

A campaign to persuade the Chancellor to drop planned hikes in the tax levied on all flights leaving the UK is being launched today at airports across the country as a new poll is released showing 3 out of 4 people think that Air Passenger Duty (APD) should not go up in the next Budget. Of those saying APD should not go up 49 per cent said APD should be reduced. Only 6 per cent said APD should be increased.

The Chancellor announced in this year's Budget that APD will rise by double inflation in 2012. Passengers travelling through airports will be leafleted by staff wearing 'Hands off our Holiday, Mr Taxman' T-shirts and are being urged to tell their MPs to say 'Hands off our holiday' to the Chancellor.

The campaign, backed by the Airport Operators Association (AOA), Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (BAR-UK), and the British Air Transport Association (BATA) is urging people to email their MP via the website www.handsoffourholiday.com and to tweet their support for the hikes to be abandoned using the hashtag #handsoffourhols.

The poll, carried out by Opinium Research for the Hands off our Holiday campaign also shows that nearly 4 out of 5 people were unaware of the plans to further increase the tax by double inflation.

Commenting on the campaign, Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the AOA, said:

"Our message to the Chancellor is that enough is enough. Air Passenger Duty has already gone up by 325% on long haul flights and 140% on short haul flights in the last five years. Family finances are under great pressure at the moment and most people save hard all year for their holiday. Working families deserve a break."

Mike Carrivick, Chief Executive of BAR-UK, added:

“The UK already has the highest rate of flight tax in the world. Why should families be discriminated against for wanting to fly off on a hard-earned break once a year?”

Simon Buck, Chief Executive of BATA said:

“The government already takes nearly £3bn in tax from passengers. This is more than the tax on the banking industry. Most people simply aren't aware how much flight tax they pay. The government should come clean about this stealth tax and drop the hikes planned for next year.”

ENDS

For further information, to arrange photos or interviews please contact Michelle Di Leo 07734 101086 or Michelle Doughty 07767 633888.

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Notes for editors

The Hands off Our Holiday campaign launch is taking place at the following airports:

Belfast International

Bristol

Gatwick

Glasgow

Liverpool

Luton

Newcastle

London City Airport

Newquay Airport

Staff wearing 'Hands off our Holiday, Mr Taxman' t-shirts will be leafleting passengers at each airport encouraging them to tell their MP to raise their concerns about next year's double inflation rise in Air Passenger Duty (APD) with the Chancellor.

Photo and broadcast opportunities for interviews and vox pops will be available from 6am – 2 pm on Monday 11th July 2011.

The campaign is backed by the Airport Operators Association (AOA), British Air Transport Association (BATA) and the Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (BAR-UK).

The Airport Operators Association (AOA) is the trade association which represents 72 UK airports and general aviation airfields in the UK – for more information, please visit www.aoa.org.uk. The AOA engages with government, Parliament, regulators and other stakeholders to secure policy outcomes which help deliver sustainable aviation in the UK.

The Board of Airline Representatives in the UK (BAR UK) is the industry association that promotes the business interests of scheduled airlines with a UK operation or representation. Membership exceeds 90 airlines. For more information visit www.bar-uk.org.

BATA is the trade body for UK-registered airlines, with members representing all sectors of the industry. In 2010, BATA members employed over 71,000 people, operated four-fifths of the UK commercial aircraft fleet and were responsible for some 96% of UK airline output, carrying 119 million passengers and 1 million tonnes of cargo. The eleven BATA member airlines are: Air Southwest, bmi, British Airways, DHL, easyJet, flybe, Jet2.com, Monarch, Thomas Cook, Thomson Airways and Virgin Atlantic. For more information visit www.bata.uk.com

The Chancellor, Rt Hon George Osborne MP, announced in the Budget 2011 that Air Passenger Duty would be frozen in 2011/12 but would be increased by double inflation in 2012/13. The campaign is seeking to persuade the Chancellor to abandon the planned rises.

The UK has the highest rate of flight tax in the world. Air Passenger Duty (APD) has gone up by 140% for short haul flights, and 325% for long haul flights in less than five years. For example, a family of four travelling to Australia pay at least £340 in tax alone. A family of four travelling to India pays at least £300 and those travelling to the United States pay at least £240 in tax. Even a break closer to home in Europe costs a family of four at least £48 in tax. Further information can be found on the Department for Transport website.

The poll was carried out by Opinium Research for the Hands off Our Holiday campaign. 2039 adults aged 18+ were surveyed online over the period 4th - 6th July 2011. The sample is nationally representative. Full details of the survey results can be found at www.handsoffourholiday.com