



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

For immediate release
17 November 2006

Livingstone Announces the Latest Attack on Car Owners

The man who has allegedly said "I hate cars" demonstrated exactly how he plans to impose his views on the rest of us by announcing yesterday that the London Congestion Tax will soon be £25 for many car owners.

All vehicles that emit more than 225g of CO₂ per km (ie. those in band G for vehicle licensing purposes) will have to pay that amount to enter the Congestion Charge zone from 2009/10.

But these are not just "gas-guzzling" 4x4s that will be affected. Almost all luxury cars will be, and even such mundane vehicles as the Fiat Croma 2.2, Ford Mondeo 2.0i/2.5, Ford Galaxy, Mazda 6 2.3, Renault Espace and Seat Alhambra models will incur such charges.

The claim is that "these new proposals will tackle pollution from private vehicles, and ensure that London is leading the way in the fight against climate catastrophic climate change", but the Association of British Drivers (ABD) says this is nonsense.

Targeting a small minority of car users will not make any significant impact on CO₂ emissions. One of the most interesting recent statements from Transport for London in their submissions on the Thames Gateway Bridge inquiry was the following statement: "Private cars constitute only 10% of total UK CO₂ emissions, and the position appears to be both under control and improving, largely due to technology". If you assume only 10% of cars are "gas guzzlers" and their owners all moved to smaller cars (with about half the CO₂ emissions), then the net impact will be 0.5% of CO₂. But of course many of them will not, so the net impact will clearly be imperceptible.

But the most energy is used when a car is manufactured and when it is scrapped, not when it is driven or parked. If this proposal is implemented, people are more likely to get rid of larger, older cars with many years life left – causing more pollution than if the cars had simply been driven.

These charges are obviously not about improving emissions, but simply about raising more money for the bureaucracy spawned by Ken Livingstone. The ABD supports measures to reduce air pollution in London, but this proposal will not achieve it, and air pollution is not just about reducing CO2 emissions. In fact CO2 is one of the more benign gases and this measure might simply encourage more use of vehicles with higher emissions of known carcinogens, such as diesel powered cars. In any case there are strong tax incentives already from fuel tax and vehicle excise duty for car owners to buy lower fuel consumption vehicles, so this measure is totally unnecessary. And why should someone who owns a vehicle that generates 226g CO2 pay more than three times that of the owner of a vehicle that generates 225g CO2 per kilometer? It's simply irrational.

Many people justified the introduction of the London Congestion Tax partly on the basis that it would reduce pollution, but in reality air pollution in the zone has gone up – this was the basis of a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority by ABD member Roger Lawson which is still being investigated (ask for a copy of the full submission if you want one).

Note: we call the Congestion Charge a tax because we agree with the US Embassy that this is simply what it is – an excuse to raise revenue for other purposes.

About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a “not for profit” voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our ABD London web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org

For further information, please contact:

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Or see the Mayor of London's Press Release at:

http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=9871