



The Alliance of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

For immediate release

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Boris Johnson Kowtows to Environmentalists and Anti-car fanatics

The announcement yesterday by Boris Johnson of a “game changer for air quality in the capital” is nothing less than an ill informed attack on private car owners. He is proposing to ban all but low emission vehicles from the city centre by introducing an “ultra low emission zone” by 2020.

Although we welcome the acknowledgement by the Mayor that one of the biggest contributors to air pollution in London is the city’s bus fleet, and hence his changes to Phase 5 of the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) regulations, he still apparently thinks it necessary to attack private car users.

In reality private car users provide a very small proportion of the overall emissions that are potentially harmful to public health in London and banning all but certain zero or low-emission vehicles will have negligible impact on the figures.

This is surely political “tokenism” of the worst possible kind. In reality it will impact tens of thousands of people on a daily basis who need to drive in central London for business or other purposes. It is simply not practical to use public transport by all people and for all journeys.

In addition the health hazards caused by air pollution in London have in our view been grossly exaggerated and the allegations simply do not stand up to scientific scrutiny.

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) will be vigorously opposing any such proposals and we invite all individuals likely to be affected by this measure to join us in a campaign to oppose it. Mr Johnson, or his Conservative Party successor, may find his re-election a lot more difficult than he did last time if he continues to propose such measures.

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More Information

The Press Release issued by Boris Johnson, Mayor of London is present here: www.london.gov.uk/media/press_releases_mayoral/mayor-london-announces-game-changer-air-quality-capital

These are some of the facts:

There are recognized air pollution problems in London, particularly in certain "hot spots" caused by traffic congestion or building and industrial activity. Particulates (PM10s and PM25s) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) are specific problems.

In the case of particulates, about 50% of those measured in central London actually blow in from outside London. In addition, particulates don't just come from vehicle emissions (particularly diesel vehicles), but are also generated by tyre and brake wear. Indeed for modern cars, the latter sources now exceed the former, so changing to zero emission vehicles in central London will affect less than half those emissions. In addition cars in central London generate only 23% of PM10 emissions, with the rest coming from taxis, LGVs, buses, HGVs, etc.

In addition it seems that "local residents" might be exempt from this ban on ordinary cars and yet they form the vast majority of those who drive in central London assuming that "local residents" means anyone living within the LEZ area (which is basically the whole of London).

Vehicles and heating systems are the main sources of NO2 in London (the breakdown is difficult to determine). But it is well known that large diesel engines as used in buses are the major source of both NO2 and particulates. Buses and HGVs are therefore the main problems that need to be tackled followed by LGVs. But the Mayor is not proposing to ban these of course. So the attack on the use of private cars is tokenism of the worst kind, attacking those who are the least contributors to pollution (and falling rapidly as new vehicles spread), and in reality it will not make a significant impact on pollution.

The above information was primarily taken from TfL sources. For more background information see this page of the ABD London web site: www.freedomfordrivers.org/Environment.htm

Contact

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About The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD)

The Alliance of British Drivers was formed from a merger between the Association of British Drivers and the Drivers Alliance. 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 Alliance 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 web sites at www.freedomfordrivers.org and www.abd.org.uk

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