

Derek Mackay MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work
The Scottish Government
St. Andrew's House
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15 May 2019

Dear Derek,

Thank you for your recent call to inform us of the Scottish Government's change in direction in its Air Departure Tax policy and a cut to what is the highest aviation tax in the world. Although we disagree on the outcome, your call was appreciated as it is always better to hear it personally than through other channels.

It's no secret that I think this decision has been taken at jet speed and without an in-depth look at the facts and evidence, and that is why I write to you. We can all agree that climate change is an issue which concerns us all and as an airport we are no different. We know that we must have a sustainable operation that encourages controlled growth yet ensures we protect connectivity and our international outlook.

Aviation is already making great strides in becoming more sustainable and actually debunking some of the myths around our industry. Sustainable Aviation is a long-term strategy which sets out the collective approach of UK aviation to tackling the challenge of ensuring a cleaner, quieter, smarter future for our industry, and it brings together major UK airlines, airports, manufacturers, air navigation service providers and key business partners. It responded to the Committee on Climate Change's report  as:


This shows that we are changing and are becoming more environmentally friendly. This shows there is a sustainable future for aviation. And it shows that we want to be part of this debate.

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I strongly feel that we need to raise the level of debate around this issue and allow all industries to have their opportunity to talk about what they are doing in terms of carbon reduction and what improvements they can make. This conversation is crucial before the government makes any further knee-jerk reactions because any decision must protect our economic interests as well as our environment. They go hand in hand and to favour one over the other does not add up.

We all accept that there are challenges ahead of us and industries must have a discussion to map out a way forward. That response will only come from a reasoned and evidence-based discussion which will allow us to take a balanced view and approach.

We admire the desire to show global leadership and want to be part of Scottish led innovation and response. But demonstrating leadership can only work if it encourages others to follow, particularly where Scotland's direct contribution to the solution will be commensurate with our modest size. Others cannot and will not follow if the price of our approach is serious damage to our economy, loss of jobs and inability to support social sustainability as well as climate change.

We must have a discussion which takes all of this into account and leads to a decisive and well-thought out plan of action that works for us all or the country risks losing out. I'm sure you will agree when I say that this debate must happen to protect Scotland's interests, and we want and deserve to be part of it.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely



Chief Executive

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 January 2019 15:10:32
To: Scottish Ministers
Subject: Meeting request - ADT

AO [REDACTED]

Good afternoon,

David Stewart MSP would appreciate a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary to discuss the Highlands and Islands exemption from Air Departure Tax. I would appreciate if you could let me know some possible dates. I can be contacted on the below details.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]
Parliamentary Researcher
Office of David Stewart MSP
Shadow Minister for Public Health
Representing the Highlands and Islands

[REDACTED]
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