



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPAA RENEWS CALL FOR CONSUMER SUPPORT IN FIGHT AGAINST APD

The SPAA has renewed its call to Members to galvanise the support of consumers, in the Association's fight against Government plans to increase APD. Following up on recent comments by new Treasury Secretary the Rt Hon Chloe Smith MP, in which she cast doubt on the likelihood of Government reducing APD 'in the near future', the SPAA is urging its travel agent Members to re-double their efforts to build strongly on the support already demonstrated by customers for its Fair Tax – Keep Scotland Flying campaign.

Comments SPAA President Brian Potter, 'The Treasury Secretary is reported to have told fellow MPs that the Government remains on its current course to levy a double-inflation increase on current APD levels – which are already damaging demand for air travel – in its 2012 Budget. This against the backdrop of unanimous travel sector opposition to APD increases during this very difficult time for family and business budgets. Our own consumer-focused survey, launched only last week, has already quantified that opposition. 95% of respondents confirm that a further increase in APD would affect their air travel habits. In fact, 57% confirm that increases in taxation during the past couple of years have already affected their travel habits. A similar proportion report that they would examine other modes of travel – rail or road, were the mooted increase to go ahead, or that they would travel less frequently; and perhaps most significantly, 95% of respondents believe that APD is having a negative impact on both the viability of domestic air routes, and the attraction of the UK as a destination – for both leisure and business travel.'

'We firmly believe that these opinions will be further validated by additional respondents; hence our renewed efforts to garner support!'

Ms Smith is also reported to have told MPs, 'It is fair to say there is no consensus on the matter (of APD). Some regional airports have asked us to consider lower APD rates for the regions, but several airlines have asked us to consider the opposite.'

According to the SPAA President, 'The consensus that really matters, as far as APD is concerned, is surely that demonstrated by the response to date to our survey – that of hard-pressed air travellers. They are saying as clearly as can be, APD is already far too high, and any further increase will only damage UK travel revenues – and as a consequence, UK tax revenues and UK Plc. We would respectfully recommend that the Treasury Secretary bears this well in mind, in her discussions with Chancellor George Osborne, in the run-up to his Autumn Statement.'

'We will be presenting the results of our survey, and a cogent argument in favour of the exemption of UK domestic air travel from APD, in our upcoming paper to Government, and we very much hope for a pragmatic and positive response.'

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Brian Potter – SPAA President

telephone 0141 427 6500 / bpotter@clydetravel.com

Kevin Thom - SPAA Vice President

telephone 01224 772828 / kthom@gabt.co.uk

Sandy MacPherson - SPAA Political Convenor

telephone 01369 707969 / sandy@macpherson99.wanadoo.co.uk

Janice Hogarth – SPAA Secretary

telephone 0131 531 0625 / jhogarth@spaa.org

