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for immediate release

## **SPAA EXPRESSES DISMAY AT bmi DECISION TO SUSPEND GLA-LHR SERVICES**

SPAA President Brian Potter has expressed the Association's dismay at bmi (British Midland International)'s decision to suspend its long-established Glasgow-Heathrow air service from 27 March 2011. Speaking following the announcement, the SPAA President said, "The recent publicity regarding the threat to this vital, but already loss-making, service has evidently come too late to affect what is a commercial decision by bmi, made all the easier by the proposed increase in Heathrow passenger fees."

He continued, "Whilst we recognise that the new charges at Heathrow are not the sole reason for bmi's withdrawal, the higher fares likely to result will inevitably affect all UK domestic travellers, further reducing already declining passenger numbers. This will be damaging for business across the board – Government, BAA, the airlines and passengers. Scotland's economy needs services like the bmi GLA-LHR one. The mooted high-speed rail links between Scotland, London and Europe are still many years away – even if they are eventually commissioned. Meanwhile, Scotland's business and leisure travellers need and deserve to have real choice when travelling to and through London - but as of 27 March that will no longer exist on the Glasgow-Heathrow route."

"It seems bizarre, because domestic services are vital to Heathrow Airport too. It claims to focus on developing as a hub for the future, rather than a point-to-point airport – so chasing away UK domestic air services will hardly assist BAA in its pursuit of that objective. Meanwhile, it's hardly surprising that, following the Government's decision to abandon plans for a third runway at Heathrow, airlines are looking to maximise their operating revenues by using take-off and landing

slots for more profitable international services.”

“And not least,” Mr Potter concluded, “we are dismayed at the potential loss of jobs – direct and indirect – at Glasgow Airport, resulting from this withdrawal. We will and must continue to lobby hard for action - via the Government and BAA – and do all we can to ensure that the existing services from Edinburgh, Aberdeen and the Highlands & Islands remain undiminished.”

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT**

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