



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Campaigners ask Government to step in on airport decision**

Campaigners fighting the expansion of Bristol airport (BIA) have asked the Government of the South West (GOSW) to step in and refer the decision on the airport's plans to the Secretary of State.

Stop Bristol Airport Expansion (SBAE) said they decided to request a 'call-in', which would result in a direct decision from Government, or a public inquiry, because they believe that the ramifications of the decision, such as the impact of increased traffic, noise and carbon emissions, stretch beyond North Somerset Council's area of control.

SBAE say that although they accept that the airport as it now stands serves the area's needs for business and leisure, they strongly believe that the incremental benefits associated with this massive expansion would be far outweighed by the extremely detrimental impacts on local communities, the environment and the local tourism economy.

MPs Stephen Williams and Don Foster have both written to GOSW in support of SBAE's request for a call-in. Both Bristol City and B&NES councils are opposed to BIA's expansion plans.

SBAE spokesperson and Chair of the Parish Councils' Airport Association Hilary Burn said:

"We have not taken this decision lightly. We recognise the value of Bristol Airport as it now stands but its growth in recent years has also been extremely damaging to its neighbours and the environment.

"There is already a precedent in North Somerset Council's opposition to development plans for new urban extensions for some of the same reasons we're opposed to BIA's plans, such as traffic congestion and building on Green Belt land. However, we believe that because the uncertainties, impacts and scale of this application are so immense and extend far beyond North Somerset's borders, this application should be referred to the Secretary of State.

"We are calling for the airport's planning application to be turned down or at least capped at 8 million passengers a year, with no further development until improvements in public infrastructure are delivered and greenhouse gas emissions can genuinely be reduced in line with the Climate Change Committee's report aimed at limiting aircraft emissions to 2005 levels."

Stephen Williams MP said: “Given the major regional significance of the airport’s expansion plans, I do not believe that it would be appropriate for North Somerset Council to decide this application. The expansion of the airport would have significant effects beyond its immediate locality.”

Don Foster MP said: “I too am deeply concerned about the proposed expansion.”

Grounds on which SBAE has asked GOSW to call in the application:

- Impacts of noise, traffic and emissions stretch beyond North Somerset; neighbouring authorities have objected, as have local Health Authorities and a large number of Parishes, NGOs, and the public
- The Climate Change Committee December 2009 report showing that national targets and aviation targets cannot be met by aviation growth of more than 60% over 2005 levels, invalidating previous Government policy (Air Transport White Paper, 2003) supporting massive regional airport expansion. Clarification is needed by the Secretary of State to allocate how much expansion can happen at every UK airport
- Additional car parking in green belt land with no case yet made by BIA, as required, for ‘very special circumstances’
- Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which includes policy on airports, is not yet in place and currently delayed
- No Strategic Environment Assessment, which is required, has yet been carried out.

SBAE have been fighting since 2005 against the airport’s expansion proposals on the grounds that: local roads are already severely overloaded and quality of life in local villages is already severely blighted by increasing noise, traffic congestion and air pollution; there will be huge increases in carbon emissions; proposed solutions to mitigate these problems are completely insufficient; all balanced against a complete lack of evidence that further growth of the airport will produce any significantly increased economic benefits and much evidence that airport growth across the South West has damaged the region’s tourism industry.

The group comprises the Parish Councils’ Airport Association, which represents 24 Parish Councils in B&NES and North Somerset district, the Campaign to Protect Rural England and Friends of the Earth local groups.

## **ENDS**

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For more information visit: [www.stopbia.com](http://www.stopbia.com)

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