

Jacob Gemma

From: Roger Lawson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 02 June 2020 13:07
To: yoursay
Subject: Congestion Charge Changes

Please note that we object to the proposed increase in the Congestion Charge (a.k.a. Tax) to £15 per day, whether a temporary increase or a permanent one. We also object to the extension of hours.

The very large increase in the charge is simply irrational. The Congestion Charge was originally designed to reduce traffic congestion but has not done that (see this page of our web site for a full analysis: <https://www.freedomfordrivers.org/congestion.htm>). It has just turned into a tax on Londoners to support public transport. And it is an excessive and punitive tax where the costs to collect the tax consume most of the revenue. It particularly discriminates against the less well off and those who have no choice about their working hours or transport options – for example the disabled or elderly.

The impact of the Covid-19 epidemic might encourage people to use private transport rather than public transport because the former is clearly safer. But the cost of the Congestion Tax is already so high, plus the cost of parking is very high, that it is very unlikely to result in substantial numbers of people moving to commuting by car into London. Most of the vehicles entering the Central Congestion Zone are goods vehicles, or those on essential journeys or on ones that cannot be made by public transport. They cannot avoid paying the tax.

Clearly the proposed increase is an intent to solve the budget problems of TfL by raising a tax on a small minority of hard-working Londoners. Why should they have to pay for the Mayor's financial incompetence which is as big a cause of the deficit in TfL as the recent pandemic.

The increase in the charge and the extended hours will have a very detrimental impact on businesses such as theatres that rely on customers visiting central London. It will also prejudice those such as the police who have to work unsocial hours in central London and cannot easily use public transport. This simply looks like the Covid-19 epidemic is being used as an excuse to attack private vehicle use in London, which is totally unjustified.

We urge you to reconsider this proposal, and look at other ways to balance the TfL budget.

In our view the Congestion Tax should be scrapped as being ineffective and regressive, not increased.

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