

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate use

FLYING TO COP26 FROM LONDON? YOU'LL CREATE 7 TIMES THE EMISSIONS

Delegates travelling to COP26 are reminded of their carbon footprint and the need to tackle large scale emitting projects such as Heathrow expansion. Campaigners, pictured at Heathrow Airport, highlight the number of emissions generated by taking the plane from Heathrow to Glasgow, versus the train – the ratio is 7:1, with the train generating just 14% of the emissions compared to flying (1).



[Image:

<https://www.no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk/photos?pgid=jnd8a3ri-b62b6c4c-c7e5-414a-ab94-ea8d976ff670>

A series of events on aviation at COP26 (2), largely focusing on the need to decarbonise the sector, will encourage the industry to adapt to more environmentally friendly measures, such as Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), but the Conference will stop short of mandating their use, or creating any binding targets to tackle the problem. One problem is that there is not a single internationally agreed definition of SAF, nor is it clear how emissions in production are accounted for. The UK Government has recently consulted on enforcing a SAF mandate and a decision is expected in early 2022 (3).

When flying through Heathrow, campaigners believe that they should be reminded that they are flying through the single largest polluter of Green House Gases in the UK *and the world's second highest transportation emitter* (4). The Airport currently emits around 20MtCO₂ of carbon annually. A 3rd runway would increase this by approximately 7MtCO₂ to 27MtCO₂.

In 2010, the aviation industry pledged to source 10% of fuels from sustainable sources in 2020. Yet by 2018, the industry had managed to source a grand total of just 0.002%. Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) production today is still less than 1 percent of overall jet fuel supply – despite it being pitched by the industry as the panacea for decarbonisation.

A recent Government document identified that approving airport expansions would hugely undermine the UK's claim to be serious about cutting emissions (5).

Paul McGuinness, Chair of the No 3rd Runway Coalition, said:

"Heathrow Airport has unrivalled status as the largest single emitter of Green House Gases in the UK, and the world's second highest transportation emitter. And, if the UK is

to meet its carbon targets, restrictions will be needed at the UK's regional airports, were Heathrow to increase its lion share of UK emissions by expanding.

"In the summer, a Government document identified that approving airport expansions would hugely undermine the UK's claim to be serious about cutting emissions. So, just as we question the sincerity of those delegates who are flying from Heathrow to Glasgow for COP26, the world may well question the Government's seriousness on carbon emissions if it doesn't rule out Heathrow expansion."

ENDS.

Notes:

1. Link to photo - <https://www.no3rdrunwaycoalition.co.uk/photos?pgid=jnd8a3rib62b6c4c-c7e5-414a-ab94-ea8d976ff670>. Enquire for further information.
2. Emissions: London - Glasgow, plane vs. train
<https://bettertransport.org.uk/plane-vs-train-race-london-glasgow-competitors-arrive-two-minutes-apart>
3. <https://www.greenvairnews.com/?p=1897>
4. <https://www.desmog.com/2021/09/28/heathrow-found-to-be-worlds-second-most-polluting-airport-in-new-report/>
5. Further, in a document published by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, "Net Zero Principles for successful behaviour change initiatives", it is actually acknowledged that there is a need to reduce frequent flying, limit airport expansion, and issue conditional bailouts to airlines. This document also highlights how the Government should recognise "the hugely impactful signal it sends to, for example, approve airport expansions, or financially support the airline industry with little demands for decarbonisation in return".
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002716/jet-zero-consultation-a-consultation-on-our-strategy-for-netzero-aviation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1002716/jet-zero-consultation-a-consultation-on-our-strategy-for-net-zero-aviation.pdf)

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