

**The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP
Secretary of State for Transport**

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR



Cc: Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Andrew Stephenson MP, Baroness Vere of Norbiton, Rachel Maclean MP, Robert Courts MP

5th November 2020

From the APPG: Fair Fuel for UK Motorists and Hauliers

Re: The Uncalled-for War on the Motorist

Dear Minister,

The Health Crisis is dominating Government attention and rightly so. Keeping the economy solvent has to be of equal priority too. However, there is another major worry to many MPs and the commercial heartbeat of our nation.

UK's 37m drivers, the millions of constituents across the country are feeling victimised by draconian charges and road restrictions initiated by local authorities and funded it seems, by the Department of Transport. The anger out there is palpable.

As a consequence, we call upon your good offices to support the following measures:

- 1. Please stop the roll out, and withdraw the plethora of new road narrowing, blockades and dedicated cycle lanes eating into our town and city roads.** The extra £250m being spent on these projects is simply a high-priced idealistic formula for even more congestion and the associated increased pollution that comes from resultant slower moving or stationary vehicles. This policy is indefensible, with our constituents up in arms at seeing high streets desolated, small businesses ruined, and emergency services impeded. With only 4% of road journeys by bicycle, the over-emphasis on cycling initiatives and their influence on policy is counterproductive, both economically and politically. It is time our core voters were listened to. Many Conservative back benchers are sharing in the Fair Fuel APPG's call to reassess the current national and local road user strategies. We call for further consultation to develop a fair all road users strategy.
- 2. Please cancel London's existing Congestion Charge Zone being further extended to the North and South Circulars that is planned for 2021.** This needless expanded tax will not reduce emissions or congestion to the levels to justify its implementation. It will however destroy businesses irreversibly, and hit low income drivers, such as shift workers, the hardest. It is simply an extension of a 'Pay to Pollute' policy to pay off TfL's massive debt. It is pathologically wrong to make the world's already highest taxed drivers be the cash cow yet again. The political and economic fallout will be devastating. Here is why:
 - Were you aware, for example, one small building firm in the East End of London with 15 vehicles, told FairFuelUK & the APPG that working inside the N and S Circular in 2021, they will have to pay an extra**

£80,000+ of congestion charges per year? This punitive charge will wipe out their profit and they will not be able to trade.

- A survey in September of 9,000 small UK firms, of which 1138 work inside London that have an essential need to use their vehicles for business, showed:
 - i. 4 out of 5 small businesses said they would have no choice but pass on the charge to their customers so will hike their prices.
 - ii. 2 out of 5 said they will not seek new business inside the N/S Circulars when the CC is introduced and will avoid working in London.
 - iii. 1 out of 5 said they would lay off staff in order to pay the charge to stay in business
 - iv. 19 of 20 said the congestion charge was simply to fill TfL's deep deficit and most certainly not to reduce congestion or reduce emissions.



3. **There is much criticism from our constituents that drivers and tax paying stakeholders, are not being consulted in decisions that are affecting our roads. Yet it is motorists increasingly taking the out-and-out hit and heightened cost of these decisions.**

The APPG calls upon the DfT to involve stakeholder organisations like FairFuelUK along with the APPG, to help formulate a long-term road transport strategy that will benefit all road users for decades to come. From motorists through to trucks, it is vital all interested voices have input into creating policies that are accepted by the majority of road users including cyclists, that will benefit business, the economy, the quality of the air we inhale and of course, all road user's safety. The demonisation of those that generate the 5th largest income to the Treasury must stop. With cliff edge target times to ban diesel and petrol vehicles getting shorter, voters are rightly upset that those who are affected worst, have no say, and their supporting voices are not involved in shaping road transport strategy. FairFuelUK, for example, has a long-standing proposal endorsed by the APPG, that will benefit the economy, improve air quality through vehicle emissions reduction, which would be both immediate and measurable. And importantly, will not hit hard pressed drivers and businesses in the pocket. That should not be ignored.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss these issues as soon as possible and look forward to your response. Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

Kind Regards

Craig Mackinlay MP

Chair of APPG for Fair Fuel for UK Motorists and Hauliers

Sir David Amess MP

Steve Baker MP

Bob Blackman MP

Andrew Bridgen MP

Rt Hon Robert Goodwill MP
Gordon Henderson MP
Jonathan Lord MP
Karl M^cCartney MP
Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP
Andrew Rosindell MP
Greg Smith MP
Henry Smith MP MP
James Sunderland MP



Howard Cox

Secretary APPG for Fair Fuel for UK Motorists and Hauliers / Founder of FairFuelUK

Richard Burnett

Chief Executive, Road Haulage Association

Brian Gregory

Director, Alliance of British Drivers