



Mr John Banfield
Inquiry Director, BAA London Airports
Competition Commission
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13 August 2007

Dear Mr Banfield

CHARGES AT LONDON HEATHROW AIRPORT

I am writing to stress the importance of continued air links between London Heathrow and Leeds Bradford Airports to support economic growth. Yorkshire Forward is the Regional Development Agency for the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Direct services to Heathrow are important in terms of attracting inward investment, supporting regional businesses and for inbound tourism to the region from overseas. This is currently the only air link between Yorkshire and Humber and any of the London airports. The route is particularly important for offering global connections via the Star Alliance and other routes from Heathrow, and also in accessing business destinations at Heathrow itself and also in the Thames Valley. For these reasons it is important that the route remains at Heathrow rather than being transferred to another of the London airports.

I understand that you are currently undertaking a review of airport charges at airports in the London area as part of a wider review of BAA's London Airports. I understand that the charging regime at Heathrow is 'flat', i.e. airlines pay the same charge per passenger to use the airport regardless of aircraft size or destination. I also understand that it is proposed that charges at Heathrow could increase by 70% over the next five years. The economics of the variety of services using Heathrow are very different, and it is likely that the impact of the increased charges may be to make some less lucrative routes no longer viable.

Direct services between Leeds Bradford and Heathrow are very important to supporting economic growth. We understand that BMI, the current operator of this service, may reduce the frequency or even withdraw the service should your current proposals be implemented. I would therefore suggest that some flexibility in the proposed charging regime is looked at to allow less lucrative regional services to continue, maintaining the vital links needed to support our regional economy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thea Stein", written over the "Yours sincerely" text.

Thea Stein
Executive Director, Economic Inclusion