



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

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Mayor Repeats Misleading Claims on the Environmental Benefits of the Congestion Charge on Television

In response to a question on the ITV programme "The London Debate" on the 21st May, Mayor Ken Livingstone suggested that air pollution within central London had fallen because of the Congestion Charge. This was in response to a question from ABD member Roger Lawson, who asked the Mayor how much he expected the proposed £25 Congestion Charge for Band G vehicles would reduce air pollution and commented that it clearly had not fallen as a result of the Congestion Charge.

But the Mayor responded: "*Carbon dioxide emissions are down by 20% in the congestion zone, and nitrous oxides and particulates, the real killers are down by 12%*". The ABD claims this is not just misleading, it is simply wrong. The real figures based on actual counts of pollution averaged over several measurement points (as measured by the London Air Quality Network) and over several years are: NO₂ – up 1.9%, NO_X – up 10.8%, PM₁₀s (particulates) – up 0.1%.

It is believed that the Mayor was referring to estimates of pollution published by Transport for London (TfL), but why he and Michelle Dix (head of congestion charging at TfL) who has also been quoting similar figures should use estimated figures when actual ones are available is not very clear. Obviously either the estimates are wrong (possibly because the increase in buses and taxes offsets any reduction from private cars), or the pollution blows in from outside the zone. Perhaps drivers simply drive around the zone, creating more pollution, which wafts inwards.

Anyway, the Mayor failed to answer the question of how much the proposed £25 will cut air pollution. The ABD queries why anyone would put forward such a proposal when they do not know the answer to this. It suggests that the likely motivation may be the politics of envy rather than real concern for the environment, as in reality the benefit is likely to be negligible.

For further information, please contact:

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About The Association of British Drivers (ABD)

The ABD is the leading independent organisation which represents the interests of private motorists in the United Kingdom. We campaign to protect the rights of individual road users and believe that road transport is a beneficial and essential element in the UK transport infrastructure. We oppose excessive taxation of motorists and are against tolls and road usage charging. We also campaign for more enlightened road safety policies. The Association is a "not for profit" voluntary organisation which is financially supported primarily by its individual members. More information on the ABD is available from our web site at www.abd.org.uk

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