



The Association of British Drivers

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Press Release – ABD London Region

For immediate release

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ABD LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST 20 MPH AVERAGE SPEED CAMERAS IN LONDON

The Association of British Drivers (ABD) has launched a campaign to stop the spread of 20 Mph average speed cameras in London. If Transport for London (TfL) pursues its current policies, there may soon be massive numbers of speed cameras enforcing 20 mph zones. Indeed there may well be a speed camera on every street corner in a few years time. TfL are already testing average speed cameras to enforce 20 mph zones in two London boroughs, with more to follow. They may well be rolled out over the whole of London in due course. There could be a spy camera monitoring your every movement in a few years (and they won't be used solely for speed enforcement) which is a massive threat to civil liberty.

Not Opposed to 20 MPH Zones

Note that the ABD does not oppose 20 mph speed limits in residential zones, where the streets are narrow and traffic is likely to adhere to the speed limit. But we do oppose enforcement by speed cameras. There is little evidence that such measures improve road safety on top of the use of simple signage and minor traffic engineering works. Indeed, the use of average speed cameras is likely to be used as a simple revenue raising measure, supported by those who have a fixation on traffic speed rather than a real focus on road safety.

Opposition to the "Surveillance Society"

We are strongly opposed to the spread of surveillance of the public by cameras, and the invasion of privacy that this entails. The UK has more surveillance of the population by cameras than almost any other country, with 4.2m cameras in total (one for every 14 people).

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London is an extreme example of this with 780 speed cameras, several hundred that monitor the Congestion Charge zone, and thousands of other cameras used for traffic management, bus lane enforcement, yellow box junction enforcement, parking bay enforcement, and security measures. According to a report published in 2010 by the Surveillance Studies Network, the UK is the most monitored industrial Western country because we have looser privacy and data protection laws. Even the Government's Information Commissioner has warned that Britain is sleepwalking into a "surveillance society" and people need to be made more aware of the "creeping encroachment" on civil liberties created by CCTV monitoring.

Penalising Motorists by Excessive Fines

London motorists already face large fines from parking offences, bus lane and other moving traffic infringements (many generated by camera systems) to fund other expenditure including concessionary fares such as the "Freedom Pass". In some London boroughs, they generate millions of pounds of profits from parking and traffic offences and rely on this revenue as a source of general funding, despite this being legally very questionable. Many of the cameras mentioned above are used to issue fines automatically for minor and often accidental infringements of the regulations. For example, yellow box junction cameras have been shown not to improve the flow of traffic at such junctions but councils and Transport for London (TfL) persist in using them because they generate revenue that far exceeds the cost of operating them. These cameras are not just used for the purpose for which they were originally installed - they are used for other purposes. So for example, the Congestion Charge cameras have been used in general law enforcement - not just to enforce the congestion tax. Average speed cameras will be yet another step in the process of extracting money from motorists for accidental infringements of minor technical offences, and is based on the hatred of car drivers by some sections of the community.

What This Campaign Will Do

The ABD will be stimulating democratic opposition to the introduction of average speed cameras by ensuring that borough residents who live where these systems are planned are properly consulted, and that they are fully informed on the matter. We will also be launching petitions to put to local councilors, GLA members and the Mayor of London calling for a halt to the installation of these systems. Public meetings and demonstrations may be used supported by direct marketing techniques and we will be using the internet and the London media to raise awareness.

More Information

Please refer also to the ABD London web site at www.freedomfordrivers.org for more background information.

Contact

For more information contact Roger Lawson on 020-8295-0378.

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.freedomfordrivers.org

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