



The Association of British Drivers

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X

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Proposed Greenwich Road Tolls (including the Blackwall Tunnel)

Dear xxxxx,

Thanks for responding to our campaign against the proposed road tolls in Greenwich. Enclosed is a note that explains what has been proposed. But in simple terms it means that you could be paying extra to drive in or through Greenwich when you already pay a lot more in motoring taxes than the Government spends on the roads.

Do you really want a system like that in central London, where paying the congestion charge is time consuming and inconvenient, where traffic speeds are almost back to where they were before the charge was introduced, and where almost all the tolls that are paid are consumed by operation of the system?

The only people who have benefited from the London congestion charge are wealthy business people, while the average person is considerably worse off.
DO NOT ALLOW SUCH A SYSTEM TO BE INTRODUCED INTO GREENWICH!

Why the Association of British Drivers (ABD) opposes road pricing

The ABD is opposed to all forms of road pricing and the general public seems to agree with us – the national petition which recently collected over 1.8 million signatures against it was created by ABD member Peter Roberts. But the Government is continuing to bribe local authorities with promises of cash from the Transport Innovation Fund and Greenwich is yet another example of where this might take place. But we have written to every single resident in the London Borough of Greenwich (over 100,000 homes), to make sure that they know about this scheme and how to object to it. Our objections to road pricing are as follows:

It Won't Work. The ABD's position is that road pricing will not cut congestion significantly, and it is enormously expensive. It almost certainly means that the total tax taken from road users will rise. We already pay about £50bn in taxes on road transport, whereas less than £8bn per year is spent on the roads – this unbalanced equation would clearly worsen with road pricing.

A good example of the failure of congestion charging schemes is the London one. This is an enormously expensive nightmare where most of the regular charges paid by motorists get consumed in operating it - not mentioning the fines for infringement which are still averaging 100,000 per month. And average traffic speeds are almost back to where they were before the scheme was introduced. In reality this scheme contributes very little to improved public transport, despite the many claims by Ken Livingstone and other people at TfL that it does. Councillor Brian Ashton from Canada recently took a look at the Congestion Charge system in London. Here are his comments: "*There will be headlights shining out of my butt before we ever see congestion charges in Toronto*".

Regressive. Road pricing is a regressive tax that impacts the poor more than the wealthy and is not something which a country that believes in equality should put up with.

Environment. Neither is there any real environmental benefit from congestion charging schemes – in fact with people taking longer routes to avoid congestion charges, they might actually make things worse. In London, air pollution has risen, not fallen based on actual measurements on the ground within the congestion charge zone.

Solution. How do we solve congestion? Simply by improving existing roads and tackling congestion hot spots. As the Eddington report pointed out, there is a fantastic return on investment by doing so because building roads or improving junctions is cheap in comparison with the financial return. Improving public transport can also help but it is not practical to fund it from congestion charge schemes and road users already contribute an enormous cross-subsidy in the taxes they pay.

How to oppose the Greenwich scheme

If you wish to stop the Greenwich proposals, you need to write, email or speak to your local political representatives. If you live in the London Borough of Greenwich, this means your local Ward councillors. A list of those and their contact details is enclosed.

Residents of other areas of London should probably best contact their Greater London Assembly member: see www.london.gov.uk/assembly/constituencies.jsp to find out who that is. Or if you live outside London, we suggest your local MP.

Everyone should write to Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA, email: mayor@london.gov.uk

Don't delay – do it today!

There is also an on-line petition you can sign on the internet at:
www.gopetition.com/petitions/no-road-tolls-in-greenwich.html .

Note that the ABD will keep you informed about future events in this campaign, and about public meetings we plan to hold. If you haven't yet given us an email address but have one, please let us know what it is as that saves us a lot in communication costs. There is also a page dedicated to this campaign on the web site of the Association of British Drivers at:

www.abd.org.uk/greenwichtolls.htm

When writing or speaking to the above, make sure you demand a full referendum of all London residents affected by the proposals, and proper consultation with other people who live in areas such as Kent or Essex who will also be affected. Don't let TfL and Mayor Ken Livingstone get away with ignoring public opinion on congestion charging as they have done in the past.

How you can help

If you can spare some time to support this campaign, even if it simply means distributing leaflets in your local roads, and particularly if you represent local organizations or businesses who wish to support this campaign, then please telephone me on 020-8467-2686 to discuss how you can assist.

Bear in mind that if we are to stop these proposals, we need active support – don't leave it to someone else to put in the effort.

ABD Membership

Also please consider membership of the ABD or a donation as that helps us to fund these kind of campaigns, which otherwise come out of our own resources and membership income.

Note that the Association of British Drivers represents the interests of ordinary motorists and this is just one example of the campaigns we have mounted to stop the excessive taxation of car owners. I would encourage you to join our association as that will ensure we can continue to represent your interests and it helps to fund our activities. Enclosed is a membership leaflet which contains an application form.

Alternatively if you simply wish to provide financial support to this particular campaign then send a cheque payable to the "Association of British Drivers – Greenwich" and post it to the above address. You can also donate on-line on the ABD web site at: www.abd.org.uk/donation.htm or become a member at: www.abd.org.uk/join_individual.htm .

If you have any questions on the contents of this letter, or on membership, then please contact me via telephone number 020-8467-2686 or via email to roger.lawson@abd.org.uk

Yours sincerely

Roger Lawson
ABD London Co-Ordinator

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