

# TravelWatch- **ISLE OF MAN**

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Representing and promoting the interests of Isle of Man Passengers

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Dear Minister

### **Air Passenger Duty**

Since our meeting with you in January, TravelWatch has become aware of the proposal by the UK Treasury to drop the exemption from Air Passenger duty which currently applies to aircraft of nineteen seats or less.

This would be of huge concern to the overall network of scheduled air services which the Island currently enjoys. Whilst our main routes and the large majority of passengers would be unaffected, the importance to the Isle of Man of a wide range of secondary destinations, for both business and social reasons, cannot be ignored, all of which are served by aircraft which fall into this category. The imposition of a charge of around £13 on fares which can be as low as £20, for example, would be hugely significant and very damaging to the on-going viability of these services, which are generally marginal at best.

We believe that it is vital that all possible pressure is brought to bear on the UK to continue with the current exemption. The UK Treasury has almost nothing to gain financially from this move as all scheduled routes within the UK operated by 19-seat aircraft, to our knowledge, would continue to have exemption from APD, either by virtue of their serving remote communities or operating under a Public Service Obligation, both of which are exempt. Also by virtue of being operated by aircraft under 5.7 tons, Twin Otter Services on Isles of Scilly Skybus are exempt. It would appear to be a ‘tidying up’ move rather than designed to bring in significant amounts of revenue.

Regardless of the above, we also believe that it is absolutely vital that the Isle of Man Government confirms that there is no intention to impose a local APD on aircraft of 19 seats or less on departures from the island, and we are hopeful that you can reassure us and the airlines on this point.

We are writing in similar terms to the Minister for the Treasury and the Minister for the Department of Economic Development.

Yours Sincerely

*Brendan O’Friel*

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