



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

24<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

### **Inclusion of International Aviation and Shipping emissions in carbon budgets: open letter**

Your Government will this spring be preparing legislation for the sixth carbon budget – the first to be legislated since the UK committed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. We are writing to highlight one specific aspect of that legislation which we consider essential to its integrity, and to the UK's credibility in claiming climate leadership. This is the recommendation that emissions from international aviation and shipping (IAS) are formally included in the sixth (and future) carbon budgets, as advised by the Climate Change Committee (CCC) in its December report.

Aviation presents unique challenges in terms of decarbonisation. The setting up of the Jet Zero Council, and funding initiatives focussed on developing new technologies and fuels to cut emissions, will be seen as greenwash unless they are accompanied by meaningful policies that apply across the whole aviation sector. Similarly, while the Sustainable Aviation coalition has set out its ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, it is difficult to have confidence in the industry's plans in the absence of policy mechanisms to hold it to account. Despite claims from the industry that it is moving in the right direction, emissions from commercial UK aviation were higher in 2019 – the year before the Covid pandemic hit – than any single previous year ever.

Inclusion of IAS in carbon budgets is a straightforward policy measure that would begin to address this problem. As well as ensuring accountability, it would help to create the right market conditions and investor confidence to drive ambition and innovation, and to ensure that aviation development is in line with the Government's wider decarbonisation agenda.

Until now, these emissions have not been formally included in national targets, but instead allowed 'headroom' in the setting of budgets for other sectors pending, for accounting purposes, the outcome of international negotiations in relation to the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the UN CORSIA mechanism. We share the CCC's view, however, that the UK should no longer delay policy action on this issue. Adjusting our domestic legislation to include IAS emissions would not impede UK negotiations on international targets and measures, and would reflect similar moves in Europe to take responsibility for international aviation emissions. Last December, the European Union took the decision to include international aviation emissions in its NDC, and France has very recently

cancelled plans to expand Charles de Gaulle Airport: it now deems those plans incompatible with its climate commitments.

In the year of the Glasgow COP, our own policies on climate change, and the extent to which the Government is acting in line with the advice of its climate experts, will inevitably come under the spotlight. Accepting the CCC's recommendation to include IAS in future carbon budgets would make the UK the first major economy to legislate for net zero emissions from all sectors, demonstrating confidence in our ability to deliver the green industrial revolution to which you have committed, and helping to ensure integrity of the sixth and future carbon budgets in keeping the UK on track to delivering our crucial shared 2050 goal.

Yours sincerely,

Cait Hewitt, Deputy Director, Aviation Environment Federation

Miriam Turner & Hugh Knowles, Co-Executive Directors, Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Roz Bulleid, Deputy Policy Director, Green Alliance

John Sauven, CEO, Greenpeace

Alice Bell, Director of Communications, Possible

Greg Archer, UK Director, Transport & Environment UK

In CC:

Grant Shapps MP, Secretary of State for Transport

Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy