

MSP says the U-turn on Air Departure Tax will affect exports

Lothian MSP Gordon Lindhurst has criticised the u-turn by the SNP Government on promised cuts to air departure tax for passengers using Edinburgh Airport.

The Scottish Conservative and Unionist MSP, who is the party's spokesman on trade and investment, highlighted the potential effect on Scotland's exports.

He also says that the government's environmental credentials are in question, with the u-turn meaning many passengers will take the more polluting option of short-haul flights from London to Scotland or other hubs such as Dublin, Amsterdam or elsewhere.

Mr Lindhurst challenged SNP Trade Minister Ivan McKee MSP, on his Government's Trading Plan document which refers to the importance of connecting Scotland to international markets, from airports such as Edinburgh.

In response, Mr McKee highlighted the SNP Government's commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency as the reasoning behind the policy switch, stressing the need to address both economic and environmental concerns.

Gordon Lindhurst said: "While we all recognise the importance of protecting our environment, the policy to cut air departure tax on long-haul flights was SNP Government policy a mere matter of weeks ago.

“This policy dents the SNP’s environmental credentials, when we will see many passengers having to take short-haul polluting flights from London or other hubs to travel to and from Scotland from international destinations.

“We must strike the right balance between reducing our emissions, while at the same time supporting economic growth.

“The SNP Government themselves recognise the importance of airports like Edinburgh to boosting exports and Scotland’s position on the international stage, as well as giving passengers greater options

“That is why following this u-turn, they must outline how they will fully support Edinburgh Airport’s growth in the coming years, without a cut in air passenger duty, alongside its commitment to tackling climate change.”