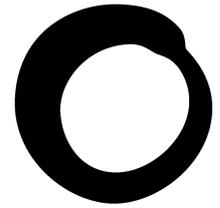


# Press Release



**Friends of  
the Earth**

**For immediate release: 5/9/07**

## **Mayor Condemns Airport Lunacy**

Friends of the Earth have received an internal Gloucestershire Airport document that rubbishes the science of climate change. Titled "Gloucestershire Airport Common Misconceptions", it was recently circulated to a number of local MPs and a select group of Cheltenham Borough Councillors. It was leaked to Cheltenham FoE so they could offer their comments on the airport's defence of their planned expansion. In an airport marketing campaign marked by underhand tactics this latest revelation sees the airport stoop to a new low. The Airport's expansion plans are opposed by a broad coalition of local residents and environmentalists.

Cheltenham Mayor, John Rawson, on seeing the report said, "I am utterly shocked that the Airport should be promoting the idea that climate change is a hoax and that the world's scientists and governments are systematically pulling the wool over people's eyes. This is lunatic stuff, and they ought to be ashamed of themselves. The fact is that the world's most eminent scientists are overwhelmingly convinced that human behaviour is contributing to climate change. It won't do the Airport any good to associate itself with mad conspiracy theories."

With the Tewkesbury planning decision now fast approaching, the Airport's case for expansion is looking increasingly shaky. Whilst their website states that the Airport "recognises that climate change is a significant issue" our elected representatives are being told the opposite. Though the Airport says that they "expect the level of pollution caused by local air traffic to actually fall over the next few years" the extended runway would allow for larger planes and greater fuel loads. The Misconceptions paper says that "Total aircraft movements are not predicted to increase" yet new services have already begun.

Cheltenham FoE Coordinator Richard Conibere said, "What the Airport says and what the Airport does bear no relation to each other. If they are prepared to lie about something as fundamental as climate change it begs the question, can they be trusted at all?" The reality of man made climate change is accepted by all the major political parties represented in Cheltenham, by the vast majority of scientists and by the majority of the British public.

The airport expansion is also opposed by the Concerned residents Against Staverton Expansion (CASE) group <[www.case-online.org.uk](http://www.case-online.org.uk)> comprised mainly of people living in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Churchdown. Spokesperson Neil Marshall said, "Expanding the Airport will blight our lives with more noise, more pollution and longer operating hours. It's a myth that denying the Airport's ambitions will lead to the site being used for house building. The Airport could simply continue to function as it is"

## Notes to Editor

- John Rawson was not among the select group of Councillors who received the marketing paper from the Chamber of Commerce. It was passed to him by Cheltenham Friends of the Earth
- Gloucestershire Airport is popularly known by its previous name 'Staverton'
- The "Gloucestershire Airport Common Misconceptions" text on climate change from page 3 is as follows:

"It is a well documented fact that the climate or weather has never been stable during the entire history of the earth and it is foolhardy to presume it will become or can be made stable in the future. Claims that it is down to human interaction have already been proven wrong due to the incorrect handling of physical data. When this error was exposed the scientists produced a new paper, purporting to produce similar results. But this too turned out to be an artefact of mistakes they had made in this case, in their arithmetic!

There are more and more scientists, in particular many young scientists, who believe it to be a hoax, but are cautious of voicing their opinion so early on in their career. Bill Gray, one of the world's foremost hurricane experts believes that the American Government have been brainwashing people for 20 years. Starting with the nuclear winter and now with global warming, a cycle that runs its course every 15-20 years. He recalls a 1975 Newsweek article that whipped up another fear 'A coming Ice Age', where Climatologists were absolutely convinced that if political leaders did not act immediately it would be harder to cope with the grim reality! Of course this never actually happened, so the emphasis was switched from one extreme (ice age) to the other (global warming) (Gray, 2006). A common theme emerging from all this, is that the only inconvenient truth about global warming is that a genuine debate has never actually taken place. This is something that hundreds of scientists, many of them prominent in the field, agree with.

I'm certainly not denying that something can be done and globally we can all help by reducing waste and working towards a greener solution. As history has indeed shown us, aviation is and always has been, at the forefront of research and development. There has been more money invested, than any other industry, in developing a greener solution. Even though it is reported that aviation is the fastest growing source of carbon emissions, when put into context it is still some considerable way behind the levels produced by other sectors. In fact, even with the predicted levels of aviation activity in the future, it still falls well below the emissions caused by other industries, which realistically it will never actually catch up."