

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

9th August 2022

Dear Constance,

RE: RAIL VS AIR TRAVEL

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns regarding the costs of rail and air travel.

Train fare revenue is crucial to funding day-to-day railway operations and wider rail investment, which benefits passengers across the country. In recent years, I know that rail operators have been investing in more trains, better stations and faster journeys. Any rise in rail fares helps this progress to be maintained.

As you may know, rail fares have risen by 3.8 percent for 2022, below the current retail price inflation of 11.1 percent. I believe that capping rail fares at 3.8 percent strikes a fair balance, ensuring that the Government can continue to invest in a more modern, reliable railway, while easing the burden on taxpayers and protecting passengers from the highest retail price inflation in years. Further, the Government gave passengers more time to purchase cheaper flexible and season tickets at the previous rate.

With regards to air travel, I do welcome that the UK Government is cutting Air Passenger Duty (APD) on UK domestic flights by 50 percent to boost Union connectivity. This will make travel cheaper and more accessible for around nine million passengers in 2023-24. However, it is right that the Government will introduce a new ultra-long-haul band, covering destinations with capitals located more than 5,500 miles from London to align APD more closely with the Government's environmental objectives.

Frequent flyers already pay more under the APD system. It is my opinion that an additional frequent flyer levy would be complex to administer, could be difficult to implement, would pose data processing and privacy concerns, and could prove unfair for those with an essential need to fly frequently. I think it is therefore sensible to keep any changes within the context of the existing APD system.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE