



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Economic argument for airport expansion gone with the wind say campaigners, as business flights lost**

Yesterday's announcement that major routes are to be axed from Bristol airport (BIA) because they have been running at a loss is a lethal blow to BIA's expansion plans, according to campaigners from the Stop Bristol Airport Expansion group (SBAE).

"These cuts are a very clear signal that BIA's biggest argument for justifying the environmental costs of its major expansion plans – that its growth will be good for the region's economy by stimulating business connectivity – simply does not stand up", says SBAE spokesman, Jeremy Birch.

"Bristol is about to lose its direct routes to Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, Munich and Zurich. These are all primarily business destinations, which are being axed because they have been under-used and running at a loss. In the meantime, new routes from Bristol in 2007 include Ibiza, Florida, Cuba and the Dominican Republic – all clearly leisure destinations.

"Currently, only 20% of BIA's passengers are business users and these cuts will clearly throw that ratio even more strongly towards the leisure market. The writing is on the wall, BIA's expansion plans are about making profits from flights to leisure destinations – not about business connectivity.

"BIA's foreign shareholders will benefit while the costs will be paid by local communities, who will suffer from increased noise and yet more traffic, while North Somerset's chances of meeting its targets for cutting CO2 emissions will be slashed by huge increases in greenhouse gases from BIA's flights.

"This raises important questions about the airport's development plans", says Jeremy Birch. "How do these cuts affect current passenger numbers and the numbers projected for the future? How does this affect BIA's much vaunted economic benefits of expansion?"

"We believe that the airport's growth projections must be significantly affected by these cuts. BIA must revise its Master Plan accordingly. There should be no further moves towards development until North Somerset Council has been presented with the correct picture."

**ENDS**

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For further information on the Stop Bristol Airport Expansion campaign, visit:

[www.stopbia.com](http://www.stopbia.com)

## Notes

- 1) The loss of these routes works out as a loss of 268 air traffic movements (ATMs) per week, or 13936 ATMs per year, out of BIA's total of 84249 in 2005 - ie a loss of 16.5% of BIA's total.
- 2) The latest count on opposition responses to North Somerset's consultation on BIA's expansion plans, held at the end of 2006, now stands at more than *5000*.