



**West
London
Business**

Chamber of Commerce

Rt. Hon. Geoff Hoon MP
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

16th January 2009

Dear Mr Hoon,

Heathrow Expansion

I am writing to express the strong support of West London Business (WLB) for the Government's decision to approve the third runway at Heathrow airport, along with the high-speed rail link and sixth terminal. Expansion of Heathrow is critical to the continuing success of the West London economy and London's status as a world city.

West London Business is the Chamber of Commerce and Inward Investment / Business Growth Agency for West London and represents some 450 members and partners in West London. We count among our members such names as GlaxoSmithKline, Diageo, BAA, HSBC, SEGRO, Jones Lang Lasalle, British Airways, the BBC, BSKyB and Brunel University, and we engage with some 3,000 businesses of all sizes each year.

Heathrow is an economic powerhouse in its own right and supports hundreds of thousands of jobs across the UK. With 72,000 people employed within the airport's perimeter fence, Heathrow is the largest single-site employer in the country. Another 30,000 people are directly employed outside the perimeter and a further 100,000 jobs in our local area are indirectly supported by the airport.

Furthermore, over half the people working at Heathrow reside in the five boroughs surrounding the airport: Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Slough and Spelthorne. In some boroughs, as many as one in nine people in employment work at Heathrow. The airport is not only crucial to the community cohesion and economic wellbeing of West London, but also to the economy of London, the Thames Valley and the South East as a whole. West London's economy in 2006 contributed £32.4 billion to the capital's success.

Not expanding capacity poses the serious threat of Heathrow declining, with the resulting ripple effect putting jobs and prosperity in West London at risk. It would also deter future foreign direct investment, which has grave implications for London's competitiveness. Heathrow is why multinational and high wealth generating companies choose to locate and stay in West London, the wider capital and the UK as a whole.

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We are strongly of the view that Heathrow cannot continue to compete as a hub airport without expansion, and will inevitably decline. It already faces fierce international competition from expanding airports in Germany, France, Holland, Spain and Italy. In this context it is important to consider the importance of transfer passengers. Without their patronage, Heathrow would not be in demand as a hub airport offering vital long haul connections to emerging and global markets. In this case airlines would be tempted to re-locate and Heathrow's status would diminish further.

WLB fully supports the Government's view that growth of the airport should only take place within strict environmental limits and also believes that strict noise and emission control mechanisms should be implemented. In addition, the technology is rapidly becoming available to keep within prescribed limits. Indeed, this offers a real business opportunity for truly innovative organisations to contribute to the development of green aviation.

In addition, we do not believe that a high-speed rail link to Heathrow replaces the need for the third runway. In reality, a high-speed link from the airport to Leeds and Manchester is the perfect complement to an expanded Heathrow. We also consider that after two in-depth Government investigations, building a new four-runway airport in the Thames Estuary is simply not practical.

Given the above points, WLB welcomes the Government's decision to approve the third runway at Heathrow and urges it to stand firm. Expansion of Heathrow is essential for the continued wellbeing of the West London community, London's world status and the wider UK economy.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank Wingate', with a stylized, flowing script.

Frank Wingate
Chief Executive
West London Business

cc Rt. Hon. Lord Mandelson
Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform