

Expansion of Bristol Airport to 12mppa

PINS Ref APP/D0121/W/20/3259234
Planning Application Ref: 18/P/5118/OUT

Proof of Evidence for PCCA

Scarlett Vester

My name is Scarlett Vester and I attend the University of Glasgow but have grown up in the beautiful countryside surrounding Bristol Airport. I am here to convey my own reasons for rejecting the appeal, as well as represent the young voices I hear both locally and across the UK that are impassioned about the climate crisis.

My overwhelming reaction to the proposal is anger at the careless attitude in contributing to climate chaos, a situation that can only wreak havoc and worldwide human misery. The other irreversible impacts of expansion, such as destruction of the green belt and harmful effects to health, also strike me as unacceptable and are far from remedied by this appeal.

COVID-19 has put a stop to the youth climate strikes that regularly drew huge support, but I know that my peers remain committed to the sacrifices that are necessary in this very moment. Increasingly, those with authority demonstrate their willingness to lead the way and are beginning to reflect the urgency we feel. The numerous declarations of climate emergencies, the hope I have for the upcoming COP26, and the rejection of the original proposal would make a change of decision for this appeal feel like a betrayal.

Without acceptable public transport links, as this appeal lacks, expansion is in a wholly inappropriate place. However, it is also being proposed in a time that demands us to leave behind such literal and symbolic acts of destruction. My generation is relying on you to not just defend quality of lives, but actually save lives. Sustainable development is now the only option going forward and the appeal for airport expansion acts in direct contradiction to this fact. Calls to action may seem quieter in the pandemic but in reality, they are getting louder and more desperate.

The idea of expanding an already significant climate change contributor shows an infuriating disregard of the long-term ramifications. Society will not recover. Furthermore, the world will undoubtedly be different post-COVID. This is of course impossible to predict, but I feel it has been revealed that international travel is far less needed than we thought. This is particularly true in my generation, leading me to doubt the insight of the airport's projections for a future we are blind to. What is more certain is the damage done by satisfaction of short-term benefits. It is clear the public do not want airport expansion, and this is even more true for the generation that will be forced to live with the aftermath.

Thank you for giving me the chance to speak.