

## Submission to the Inquiry on Bristol Airport Expansion

This year has seen a leap in the amount of wildfire activity during heatwaves and around 18 million hectares (180,000 km<sup>2</sup>) of land have been destroyed up to the end of August. This is part of the billion hectares lost over the last 40 years. This increase is part of a trend and wildfire activity can be seen as a proxy for CO<sup>2</sup> concentrations. In the USA, the number of hectares burned in 2020 is almost double the amount of 2016 and there have been unusually large fires across Europe and even in the Arctic circle. And while forest fires are part of a natural process, the level and intensity of them is new. We know that forests help store carbon. We also know that as the amount of CO<sup>2</sup> increases in the atmosphere they are more likely to burn and release the previously stored carbon adding to that which we are emitting from man-made activity. In the last 20 years, deforestation has resulted in an extra 98 G tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup>.

We have little control over this process now we have set it in motion through man-made increases in CO<sup>2</sup>. Better forestry techniques might help to an extent, but the risk now remains high. So we are going to have to compensate for this increasing source of greenhouse gases by regulating our own emissions. The fires mean we are overshooting our targets so we should not be making plans to increase emissions intensive activities on the basis of something that may happen sometime in the future. If aviation technology improves to the extent that the air fleet at Bristol's emissions actually fall then perhaps expansion could be considered then, as the Committee on Climate Change recommend. (However, the issues of noise and congestion still remain.) But as the airport has no control over technological advances nor over the third parties using it, they have no means of guaranteeing improvements in emission. To pretend such advances will provide a solution is disingenuous.

Thirteen years ago, I went to see my MP to ask him to sign the private members bill which led to the Climate Change Act of 2008. He told me that the answer was carbon sequestration. There would find a technological fix to the problem. There are no signs of large- scale sequestration projects and our natural source (forests) is dwindling. In the meantime CO<sub>2</sub> levels have risen from 384 ppm to almost 415 ppm (August figures). A rise of over 30 ppm in 13 years. We have seen the effects of that increase they have been devastating to many around the world in terms of life, housing and livelihood. The next 30 ppm will take us to catastrophic climate change. The point of no return. We should take note that promises of technological advances do not arrive as quickly as we need them to, especially when there is complacency on behalf of decision makers. We cannot afford to gamble anymore. Therefore the Committee on Climate Changes recommendations need to be put into action. No more expansion until there have been demonstrable reductions in emissions.

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