

I *strongly* oppose Bristol Airport's planning request to increase their cap from 10 to 12 million passengers per year.

To explain my feelings on this, I'd like to begin by describing what we know from Earth System Science:

The Earth System, composed of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere and biosphere, is effectively a closed system. What this means is we have access to a fixed amount of matter; mineral resources are limited. It also means that any outputs, or changes to one part of the system, have effects on other parts of the system.

Another significant feature of our Earth System, are the feedback loops essential for maintaining equilibrium; *the Earth System must be able to maintain equilibrium* in order to continue providing the correct conditions to support life.

Just like the feedback loops within the human body which are essential for survival (e.g. the human brain responds to signals of elevated temperature, causing dermal blood vessels to dilate, sweat glands to secrete and hairs to stand up. This releases excess heat to the surroundings, otherwise the body system could lose equilibrium and die). Similarly, the Earth System's survival depends on its capacity to respond to feedback.

Since we are part of our Earth System, we are also part of its feedback loops: the survival of our Earth System depends on us being able to receive and *respond* to feedback.

The feedback we are receiving is very clear:

- Human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe
- Evidence of observed changes in extremes such as heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, and tropical cyclones, and, in particular, their attribution to human influence, has strengthened since the Fifth Assessment Report
- Global warming of 1.5°C and 2°C will be exceeded during the 21st century unless deep reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) and other greenhouse gas emissions occur
- Under scenarios with increasing CO₂ emissions, the ocean and land carbon sinks are projected to be less effective at slowing the accumulation of CO₂ in the atmosphere
- With every additional increment of global warming, changes in extremes continue to become larger- including hot extremes, marine heatwaves, heavy precipitation, droughts, tropical cyclones

(taken from the *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change - 6th Assessment report*).

So the feedback is there, whether you choose to read the science or notice the weather conditions we are experiencing worldwide.

The feedback is clear: are we responding?

Without intact feedback loops the Earth system cannot stay in equilibrium and continue to support life.

Are we awake? Are we responding? And if not, why not? What is getting in the way? It's time to take an honest look at our values, beliefs and priorities.

I didn't want to make any assumptions on this so I had a deeper look at what Bristol Airport give as their priorities for expansion. I found these priorities listed on their website, from Dave Lees (Chief Executive Officer at Bristol Airport):

- ...meeting demand for air travel
- ...more routes, destinations, jobs
- ...ensure we continue to connect our region to the world, providing a gateway for business, investment, and tourists.

My sense is that these priorities speak of speed, ease of travel, and economic growth. Letting these priorities guide this decision is likely to come at a significant cost:

I feel that increasing the capacity of the airport will mean increased carbon dioxide emissions from increased flights, as well as from the building of new infrastructure. I feel that air pollution will increase if the airport were to expand, both from the extra flights and from increased road traffic to and from the airport. I sense that noise pollution would also increase, and I oppose the disruption to local ecosystems and habitats.

So I ask us to take an honest look within: How do you feel about Bristol Airport potentially expanding its capacity from 10 to 12 million passengers per year? *And what values are driving these feelings?*

This inner work takes courage and integrity. It is our responsibility to see what values guide us when we make important choices such as this one; choices which will affect not just human lives but the lives of other beings and the future of our planet.

So please have the courage to see: are you guided by values centered around speed, ease of movement, having more of the globe accessible faster (instead of taking the time to travel to other airports or taking the train instead of flying), economic growth, profit?

We have been conditioned collectively, largely since the industrial revolution, to value speed, ease, quantity over quality. The consequences of this are deeply significant and we are seeing the environmental effects of this conditioning with greater and greater intensity.

These values are not sustainable: when one variable in a system is consistently valued out of proportion to the others, e.g. speed, profit, economic growth, the system cannot stay in balance,

goes into overshoot and collapses. Furthermore, blocking feedback is ultimately suicidal as the system cannot self-regulate.

The latest IPCC report clearly shows us we must *deeply* reduce carbon dioxide emissions, not risk increasing them.

If we are not responding to this feedback - what is getting in the way?

A quote from Joanna Macy: Uncertainty, when accepted, sheds a bright light on the power of intention. That is what you can count on: not the outcome, but the motivation you bring, the vision you hold, *the compass setting you choose to follow*.

So I leave you with this:

I stand for what I stand on, do you? And if not, why not? It is our life-support system.