

REPLY TO THE MAYOR ON DRAFT AIR QUALITY PROPOSALS

Stanley Roth, licensed cab driver, has written to the Mayor, saying:

Dear Mayor Johnson

In your open letter to the taxi trade you state:

“We have already made great strides forward in reducing emissions from taxis but a lot more needs to be done if we are to achieve the improvements in air quality we so desperately need. This is my rallying call to you - London’s black cab drivers - to help us to do this.

“We are looking at how we can encourage the take up of new, cleaner, less polluting vehicles. This could be through the introduction of a 15-year age limit on taxis and private hire vehicles in 2012, moving to a 10 year age limit from 2015. Let me be clear - these policies I am proposing will not affect the vast majority of you who have already upgraded your vehicles. They are aimed at the small majority who have older cabs, which tend to be more polluting. Cleaner, newer vehicles will be better to work in, will mean financial savings as they are more fuel efficient and customers will benefit from a better service, not least the huge crowd heading here from across the globe in 2012.”

I nearly died in one of our last infamous London smogs in 1961. Because of this, for many years I have been promoting the use of cleaner, greener

cabs in exactly this way. The first EURO5+ TX1 was passed July 2008. I drive a gas taxi and the emissions better EURO5 on LPG which is just one of the alternatives available to taxi owners when your predecessor decided all cabs had to be Euro III compliant,(which was a waste of £2,500 because it did not work). LPG/CNG/LNG alternatives actually work. What is more, the PCO said that Gas taxis had a minimum of 20 years subject to condition. So all taxis could be EURO5+ by 2012.

May I respectfully remind you that the vehicle that London’s taxicabs drivers have to use is limited by the Conditions of Fitness controlled by TfL. In New York City the Mayor has taken the situation in hand and there is no reason why London cannot follow suit, with no diesel buses on our roads. Why not investigate other means of fuelling our taxis, why don’t you tell all 33 boroughs to use NGVs and why not make it a requirement for all single deck buses to be NGV by 2012? (If New York can do it you better it). I am “keen to work with you to do this” as you state in your letter and I too want to see cleaner air in our city. Also I think there is also money available from the EU. All this was bought at a meeting on 8th October at City Hall with Darren Johnson and Ian Wingrove for the GLA and David Trevett and myself.

Stanley M.Roth MITG Badge number 6507

A BOMBSHELL FROM BORIS *by Alan Fleming*

Following on from a previous article about Euro 4 for the cab trade, our wonderful Mayor has dropped another bombshell. You will by now have heard that an age limit proposal is to be placed on all cabs. By 2012, this would mean no cab that has reached an age of fifteen years will be licensed. Further by 2015 all cabs of ten years of age will not be licensed. Once again the cab trade are being targeted by the clowns of TFL under the leadership of a Tory Mayor.

Never in my worst nightmares did I imagine that a Tory Mayor of London could do this to a trade which gave him wonderful support during his campaign. His letter to the trade in the last issue of Taxi Globe was so patronising that it is an insult. He states that he wants the London Cab Trade to play its part in reducing pollution, does he not remember we have already done this and it cost the trade £23million. He cannot say that he was unaware of this as I discussed this with him during his campaign. He states that his proposal will only affect a small minority of the trade and newer vehicles will save us money as they are more fuel efficient. Shows just how much he knows as my 20 year old banger does 25 to the gallon and the new TX4 only gets 18 if you are lucky. The road tax on the so called more environmentally friendly vehicle is £400 per year and the road tax on older cabs is £185. I have just had a new radiator on the old Metro which cost £145 on the new TX4 it is over £700, so where are the financial savings? And why does he not include buses in his proposals as some of them are over 40 years old?

In the trade paper Cab Driver it states that by 2015 there will only be 12,000 cabs left on the

road. At that I am not surprised as many of the fleet owners I am informed will be closing down. This will mean that thousands of drivers will not be able to work as there will not be many cabs left to rent. I have heard a whisper that there could be a legal challenge on the way to stop this hair brained proposal. However, were the challenge not be successful it does not stop there. There will most likely be a claim made against TFL for compensation for the loss of a business. And not just from the garages but also from individual drivers. Just look at the prospect of what this would cost TFL if a compensation claim were successful. Many of the older cabs are owned by older drivers who work three days a week to supplement their pensions. At their time of life they would not be able to buy a new cab and they would not be able to rent one for just three days a week, that’s if there are going to be any to rent. So these drivers would be entitled to compensation as well which could be done by a class action and cost TFL £50ml. Then there are the garages so the total could double. You may think that this is pie in the sky so I will give you two examples. Some years ago the fishing fleet was limited to fishing only three days a week, because of this they were awarded compensation. The abattoirs had to comply with new hygiene regulations or close down they to were awarded compensation for the loss of their business.

There are other proposals that he has announced because London and the UK have not met their targets for reducing pollution. If these targets are not met a £300ml fine is in the pipeline. One of the Mayor’s proposals is to close certain roads to motor vehicles on hot windless days. This is

because the fumes from motor vehicles do not dissipate quickly enough. He has announced that this will be at Marble Arch, Euston Road, Marylebone Road and Tower Hill. Now this shows what a brainless bunch we have got down at City Hall, as this will cause wide spread congestion, and a lot more pollution. You only have to look at the fiasco at Oxford Circus where Regent Street south bound has been reduced to one lane. All day long now the traffic stretches back up Portland Place almost to Regents Park. This is the madcap scheme of Westminster Council. The proposal to close the mentioned roads will cause immense congestion and man made pollution and probably increase respiratory diseases on the citizens of London, who TFL claim to be protecting.

Can you imagine closing Marble Arch this will cause major congestion on Park Lane, Bayswater Road, Oxford Street and Edgware Road. All the side streets will be congested and like wise the other named locations. This will be man made chaos and heavy and wide spread pollution. When London Voted in a new mayor we all hoped we would have a brighter future. However, it seems that we have jumped out of the frying pan into the fire.

Pollution is man made but it is not the fault of those who drive, the culprits are the local councils. Councils have closed of many side streets and forced all the cars into reduced road space and caused congestion and pollution. This is backed up by The Road Research Laboratory. Unfortunately the block heads that run London can’t see this. So we all have to suffer because London is run by a bunch of incompetents.