

Taxes to Save the Environment - a progressive air trave...

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I believe that we need [Tax to Save The Environment \(TASTE\)](#). I have offered two already. One is [VAT on food products made from cattle, sheep and goats](#). The other is a [higher rate of VAT on consumer goods that are designed to have limited life](#).

Now let me turn to a contentious issue, which is increased tax on air travel. This, of course, would be politically contentious. As yet people remain dedicated to their summer holiday in the sun. And to challenge that would be hard. So let's not take on impossible odds like that right now and let's instead deal with the real hard-core problem flyers.

These are those who travel a great deal (and on occasion I am guilty of this, and I am aware of it). These travellers fall into two groups. One is those who travel for business. Most people, I think, presume they are the big problem. Research shows that they are not. The real problem travellers are the second homeowners who have properties in two countries where air travel is required to get between the two.

The problem is that the second homeowner travels frequently, and has massively increased demand for short-haul travel in Europe, in particular. Their carbon footprint vastly exceeds that of most in society. Their persistent days in the sun are bought at cost to generations to come.

So how to solve this? The answer was promoted a while ago, but I have heard little of it of late. It is a progressive airline usage tax. Each person can, of course, be readily identified when travelling. They have to use a passport. And few have more than two passports so evading using multiple passports is hard (and can be legislated for, with very big penalties attached). Then what should happen is that when a person books a flight they should be asked for their passport number, and depending on the number of flights they have already taken in a year they should be charged a progressively more expensive rate of tax on their ticket.

The first flight will be tax-free: the holiday in the sun will continue, at least for now.

But thereafter the rate will rise, and probably after three flights quite significantly.

This could quite rapidly change behaviour. And that is exactly what it would be designed to do. [Taxes to Save The Environment](#) have that as their objective.