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AIR PASSENGERS AND CREW AT RISK FROM 'CONTAMINATED AIR'

Call for a 'Public Inquiry' into the ongoing exposure of passengers and crews to contaminated air on UK transport aircraft backed by major opposition parties.

Thousands of air passengers are put at risk each year from toxic fumes leaking into aircraft cabins, according to a leading organization representing over 500,000 aviation workers globally in 3 continents.

The Global Cabin Air Quality Executive (GCAQE), formed in 2006, is calling for a full public inquiry into the ongoing 'Contaminated Air' issue on UK aircraft, in light of substantial evidence that numerous chemicals such as tricresyl phosphate and tributyl phosphate, present in oils and lubricants, leak daily into cabin air supplies. Chemicals known to have immuno- and neuro- toxic effects.

British Ministers say that 1 in 2000 flights could be affected by so-called 'fume events'. GCAQE believes these events are occurring far more frequently, on a daily basis and have done so for over three decades.

An Australian Senator recently revealed a secret 1993 agreement between British Aerospace and two now-defunct Australian airlines relating to 'obnoxious oil and other (the "cabin environment problem") fumes affecting the passenger cabins of some or all of the aircraft.'

Commenting, Co-Chairman of the Global Cabin Air Quality Executive and former airline pilot, Captain Tristan Loraine, said:

"International airlines continue to preside over a global scandal. Not only are they supplying the travelling public with unfiltered engine air to breathe, known for decades to sometimes become contaminated with toxic chemicals. They don't tell the public there is a risk of exposure or when they have been exposed. This has to be a breach of their human rights."

"No UK aircraft has any form of detection system fitted to warn when the air is contaminated. Each year thousands of contaminated air events go unreported."

"The Civil Aviation Authority and the Department of Transport are both experts at 'spin' but have negligently failed to protect the travelling public. There is overwhelming evidence to show that exposure to contaminated cabin air is causing unacceptable risks to health and flight safety and the precautionary principle should be applied. Solutions to resolve this problem exist and they know it."

"After decades of dissembling only a full public inquiry can get to the facts and protect airline passengers and crew alike."

GCAQE has secured the support of all the main opposition political parties in its call for a public inquiry:

- Conservative Party Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, **Teresa Villiers MP**.
For media interviews contact: 0207 2195178 or 07623 945389
- Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Transport, **Norman Baker MP**.
For media interviews contact: 0207 2192864
- Green Party Principal Speaker for England and Wales, **Dr. Caroline Lucas MEP**.
For media interviews contact: 0207 5610282

Tristan Loraine & Judith Murawski
GCAQE Co-Chairs

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

1. GCAQE comprises some 20 organisations in 3 continents and represents around 500,000 airline pilots, crew and engineers.
2. All commercial jet aircraft supply breathing air for passengers and crews taken directly from the engines and supplied unfiltered to the passenger cabin. This air, known as 'bleed air' is known to become contaminated with hazardous chemicals present in synthetic jet engine oils and hydraulic fluids. These chemicals include the organophosphates 'tricresyl phosphate' and 'tributyl phosphate'.
3. British Transport Minister, Lord Bassam of Brighton, recognised that 1 in 2000 flights report 'fume events' in exchanges with Liberal Democrat Peer, Lord Tyler, on 18th October 2007, HL Hansard column 786 - <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200607/ldhansrd/text/71018-0001.htm>
4. Captain Tristan Loraine served as an airline pilot between 1986 and 2006. He sits on international committees where these matters are discussed. He is also the author of the novel 'Toxic Airlines' and recently produced the feature length documentary 'Welcome Aboard Toxic Airlines' now showing in selected UK cinemas.
5. GCAQE researcher, former pilot and PhD student, Susan Michaelis recently published the 844 page 'Aviation Contaminated Air Reference Manual' documenting the history of the hazards associated with synthetic jet engine oils and hydraulic fluids leaking into aircraft cabin air supplies. Copies are available from selected public libraries or from www.susanmichaelis.com.
6. The history of the hazards associated with synthetic jet engine oils and hydraulic fluids leaking into aircraft cabin air supplies have been a concern since the 1950's. Appropriate research, called for in 1977 following the documented incapacitation of a crew member, has never been undertaken.
7. An EDM currently exists in relation to this matters: EDM 1017 - CONTAMINATED AIR ON COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT - 22.02.2008

For more detailed information on the specific reasons for calling for a 'Public Inquiry', please refer to the 'latest news' section on our website at:

www.gcaqe.org.

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