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GMB

SCOTLAND

11 February 2019

Mr Derek McKay MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Derek

Proposed Workplace Parking Levies

On behalf of GMB Scotland members in both the public and private sectors I want to make clear our complete opposition to any proposals to empower local authorities to introduce workplace parking levies. Such a tax on going to work would be an attack on the take home pay of our members and would be completely unacceptable to them and us.

I am aware that this power already exists for local authorities in England but that to date only one local authority has introduced a scheme. This scheme passes the cost of the tax on to workers and has a regressive effect on those who can only just afford to run a car. Workplace parking levies may be superficially attractive to city dwellers keen to reduce congestion in the centre of town but there is no evidence that they contribute to modal shift for those workers who are able and willing to make a change in how they get to work. Decent public transport, which far too few of our members are able to rely on in Scotland, is what makes the difference. Ill-thought out punitive measures like this one appear to have been conceived in ignorance of the reality of the journey to work for many of our members. People who work shifts, have caring responsibilities for others or who live outwith the areas best known to our metropolitan politicians are just some of those who would be facing a pay cut if these proposals are allowed to stand.

I am well aware that the Scottish Green Party have little interest in Scotland's economy but I am surprised that the Scottish Government are willing to countenance such a policy. Against a backdrop of a funding crisis in Scottish local government this measure is a distraction and the level of concerns from our members already indicates that it will be deeply unpopular too.

GMB SCOTLAND – PROTECTING YOU AT WORK

GMB Scotland Secretary: Gary Smith
Fountain House, 1 Woodside Crescent, Charing Cross, Glasgow G3 7UJ
Tel: 0141 332 8641/9501 Fax: 0141 332 4491 Web: www.gmb.org.uk

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Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Economy and Fair Work

Finally, I am aware too that various exemptions for public sector workers are being considered. Our members in public services will not take kindly to any suggestions that professional staff may be given wholesale exemptions whilst lower paid workers are caught up in this new tax. Equally, they will not be impressed by the suggestion that one part of a local council should be funded by taxing the staff of another. However, you should also be under no illusion that GMB Scotland on behalf of our thousands of members employed in factories and other non-public service workplaces all over Scotland will be absolutely furious if they are targeted by this measure. I can assure you that they will not make the distinction about which political party is in party in their local council either.

I hope that the Scottish Government will reconsider its position and not choose to side with the Scottish Green Party over ordinary people trying to get to work.

Yours sincerely



GARY SMITH
GMB SCOTLAND SECRETARY