MP AND ROAD SAFETY CHARITY EXPRESS ANGER OVER MOTORWAY SERVICE CHARGES

Tuesday 10 February, 2015

Tired drivers should not have to pay to take a vital and life-saving rest at motorway service stations, an MP and a road safety charity have said.

David Davies and the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) have hit out at charges imposed by private firms on motorists who stop for more than two hours to avoid falling asleep at the wheel.

Mr Davies has teamed up with the IAM to call on the government to change its policy on the two-hour free parking limit, which service station operators have to comply with.

The Monmouth MP, who previously worked in the haulage industry as a continental lorry driver, wants longer hours set before parking charges apply. He argues that drivers should be allowed to rest properly instead of opting to go back on the road to avoid having to pay hefty fees.

"Charging large amounts of money to park could be increasing the risk of accidents caused by driver fatigue," said Mr Davies.

"This is profiteering plain and simple. There is no justification whatsoever for making a charge. It is bad enough that motorists pay over the odds to buy a coffee or snack at a service station without the worry of paying vast charges for taking forty winks.

"Limiting parking time at motorway service stations is clearly contrary to the main reason for their existence – to provide rest stops."

Mr Davies' campaign has been backed by the IAM. While the government encourages drivers to take regular breaks as part of its key objectives on motorway service areas, the IAM would like the campaign to receive financial backing. The issue forms a key part of the charity's manifesto (1).

Through its THINK! campaign the Department of Transport suggests that almost

20 per cent of accidents on major roads are sleep-related; sleep-related accidents are more likely than others to result in a fatality or serious injury; and men under 30 have the highest risk of falling asleep at the wheel (2).

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) information suggests one-fifth of accidents on motorways and other monotonous types of roads may be caused by drivers falling asleep at the wheel (3).

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "Service areas are meant to be about safety and taking a break on a long boring journey. All too often these days they are more about selling things at inflated prices to a captive audience.

"The two hour parking rule leaves many drivers confused and worried that they may inadvertently go over the time limit if they stop for a break, which is not a good recipe for safer motoring," he added.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

References

1. http://iam.org.uk/images/policy/PDFs/iam_motorway-services_june2013.pdf
2. http://think.direct.gov.uk/fatigue.html
3. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data

The IAM is the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to improving standards and safety in driving, motorcycle riding and cycling.

The commercial division of the IAM operates through its occupational driver training company IAM Drive & Survive. The IAM has more than 100,000 members in the UK and Ireland. It is best known for the

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advanced driving test and the advanced driving, motorcycling and cycling courses. Its policy and research division offers advice and expertise on road safety.

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