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Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
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18th July 2016

Dear Mrs May

Congratulations on becoming Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister.

We expect that you will want your Government to deliver the ambitions and principles set out in the Conservative Party Manifesto of 2015 regarding protecting the natural environment and green spaces. These ambitions include:

- Protecting Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Protecting moors, meadows, wildlife and nature to “pass them on to future generations”.
- “We set ourselves the goal of being the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than that in which we found it” (Page 54).
- We will continue to support the UK Climate Change Act and meet our climate change commitments. (Pages 56 and 57).

To meet these commitments your Government must rule out airport expansion in the South East. Expanding Gatwick or Heathrow would betray the Home Counties, destroy our livelihoods and be responsible for the biggest destruction of British heritage since the Blitz.

For example, a new Gatwick runway would mean:

- The destruction of 17 listed buildings with many of national importance.
- The destruction of ancient woodland.
- New flight paths - and 20 hours+ of noise - over Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and historic sites such as Hever Castle, Penshurst Place, Chiddingston Castle.
- Disruption of wildlife habitats at Knepp Castle, South Downs National Park, Ashdown Forest and elsewhere.

- Unacceptable increases in air pollution that will make areas around Gatwick worse than Heathrow as there is no alternative but to force additional traffic on to the congested roads and lanes.
- High carbon emissions that would make meeting the UK's legally binding CO2 targets, under the Climate Change Act, very hard to achieve.

Expansion at Gatwick won't just be a temporary disruption; it would see the irreversible destruction of Britain's heritage and quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and the millions that visit every single year.

This would be an unacceptable loss of heritage in any circumstance but it is particularly so given the total lack of economic benefit as a result of expanding Gatwick. As the Government's own Airports Commission has said: "*Gatwick is well-placed to cater for growth in intra-European leisure flying*". It concluded that Gatwick would add just one additional daily long-haul destination compared to today.

A decision to expand Gatwick is not a choice between protecting the environment or growing the economy. It means rejecting both. And in doing so it would betray local residents, future generations and businesses across the whole of the UK.

You have expressed concerns in the past that a new Heathrow runway would need to be "consistent with national targets for tackling climate change and cutting CO2 emissions." A new runway at Gatwick would create the same climate change problems.

As this topic is of significant interest to local Conservative Associations, we have copied this letter to the Chairs of the Conservative Associations adjacent to Gatwick and Members of Parliament.

Yours Sincerely

CAGNE, Communities Against Gatwick Noise and Emissions

Campaign to Protect Rural England, Sussex Branch (CPRE Sussex)

Campaign to Protect Rural England, Kent Branch (CPRE Kent)

Campaign to Protect Rural England, Surrey Branch (CPRE Surrey)