

PRESS RELEASE



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MP opposition to ‘bombsite Britain’ tax doubles

Political support for the British Property Federation (BPF) campaign against a Gordon Brown stealth tax on empty commercial property has doubled in the fortnight since Parliament reconvened.

More than 70 MPs from the three main parties have signed up to a Commons motion calling for the scrapping of business rates on empty property. The Conservatives added their backing to the campaign last month with shadow business minister Alan Duncan calling the tax ‘immoral’.

While the government’s own regeneration chiefs have warned how the tax was making cities “look like broken teeth”, council leaders have spoken out about the huge waste of local tax payers’ money being spent paying empty rates on vacant council-owned properties.

Hundreds of buildings are being razed as the result of the tax on empty property, while businesses already hit by the downturn and impending recession are being driven under by the tax on their business failure.

Since the motion was placed by Halifax Labour MP Linda Riordan in July, opposition to empty rates has continued to grow. A full list of MPs signed up to the motion can be found at:

Liz Peace, chief executive of the BPF, said:

“Charging full rates on empty property is like forcing the unemployed to pay income tax. It’s ludicrous to think that anyone would deliberately keep a property empty when values are falling through the floor. By continuing to press ahead with this tax purely to raise revenue, the government is risking pushing business into a longer term crisis. You cannot put a figure on the financial cost of regeneration schemes lost and affordable property which will be demolished because of empty rates.”

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