

Drop car park tax and we'll support transport bill, SNP told

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The Scottish Conservatives will support the SNP government's Transport Bill, but only if the hated car park tax is dropped.

MSPs will debate the legislation tomorrow (Wednesday) which includes the controversial proposals to impose a £500-a-year levy on commuters and businesses.

However, ministers have been told that the Scottish Conservatives will back other proposals in the bill – such as measures on low-emission zones, changes to bus franchising and tackling pavement parking – as long as car park tax is removed.

Since announcing the plans, which were not in the original bill introduced by the SNP government but later added by the Greens, the nationalists have been severely criticised over this policy by workers, businesses, unions and motoring groups.

Even the police have warned that such measures may compromise the safety of officers.

The Stage Three vote itself will take place on Thursday.

Scottish Conservative shadow transport minister Jamie Greene said:

“This regressive tax will harm the most vulnerable in society and punish hardworking people right across the country, which is why we tried to exempt hard working emergency services, teachers, those on low incomes, the disabled and night shift workers.

“If the SNP wants our support with its Transport Bill, it can get it – but the car park tax must be scrapped now.

“This isn't about localism or tackling climate change, if this tax was so important to the SNP why wasn't it in the original bill presented to parliament?

“This has the potential to be one of the most hated policies brought in since the SNP came to power and has been roundly criticised from all quarters.

“It's time for the SNP to swallow its pride and ditch this proposal so we can pass a decent Transport Bill which sticks to its original objectives.”