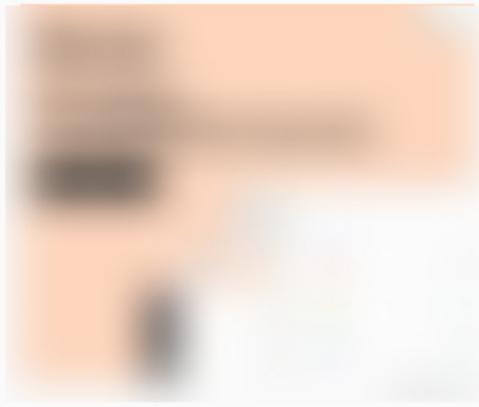




France proposes to increase fuel taxes for private jets (Photo by Kevin Dietsch / GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA / Getty Images via AFP)

France is set to dramatically increase taxes on fuel for private jets, as the government rejects a proposal from environmentalist and left-wing senators to ban short flights altogether.

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Last year, environmentalist senators proposed a bill planning flights by private jet if the journey can be made by train in less than two-and-a-half hours - bringing private flights into line with commercial ones in France;

At the same time MPs from the far-left La France Insoumise party, sitting in France's Assemblée nationale, had filed a bill to ban the use of all private jets in France, calling it "an urgent ecological measure".

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Rather than go down the all-out ban route, the 2023 Budget bill includes provisions for a 70 percent increase in fuel tax for private aviation from 2024, Minister of Transport Clément Beaune told MPs in the Assembly during a debate on the pollution caused by private jets.



And he promised further action may be possible as soon as 2024.

Beaune has made no secret of his opposition to a total or partial ban on private jet flights, despite admitting that some examples - such as football club Paris Saint-Germain using a private flight to Nantes, which is a two-and-a-half-hour train ride from the capital - were "shocking, often out of place, sometimes unacceptable".

He went on: "I announce to you, we will go further if you agree in the budget for 2024 by proposing that private commercial aviation (...) may be subject to an additional contribution, an eco-contribution revised upwards, which will allow us to precisely take into account these behaviours," continued the minister.

"The general ban is good for the conscience but does not advance ecological transition in practice," Beaune said, stressing the "legal obstacles" and the difficulty of defining and controlling exemptions.



Environmentalists proposed to ban "non-scheduled air transport services of passengers not subject to commercial operation", as well as non-scheduled public air transport services "in which the number of passengers is less than 60".

MP Julien Bayou said: "It is the measure that penalises the fewest people but produces the maximum effect for the climate and the atmosphere," he said.