

SCOTTISH TOURISM INDUSTRY LEADERS SAY NO TO THE BED TAX



The Scottish government is backing away from the largely unpopular “bed tax”, which was meant to be added to tourists’ expenses, even as local authorities continue with their efforts to garner support for the levy.

After several voices in the Scottish tourism industry protested against the proposed tax, which was supposed to help pay for the country’s major events, **as it would likely discourage visitors and endanger one of the country’s best performing sectors, the government is now insisting no such bill is in the works.**

This proposal, which is backed by Edinburgh’s council leaders, was born out of the necessity to maintain and increase funding for the city’s renowned international festivals and celebrations, which are in danger of losing their popularity if a higher level of investment can’t be sustained, a study published in May 2015 claimed.

According to the Scottish Tourism Alliance, however, the bed tax as an attempt of finding “innovative solutions” for funding the festivals would not be “sensible”, especially at a time when Scotland already struggles to stay a competitive tourism destination.

Scottish tourism industry insiders stress the fact that “value-for-money” is an important factor for travelers when choosing their destinations and Scotland is an expensive destination already, when taking currency conversion rates into account. With this in mind, **the Alliance believes adding the “bed tax” to tourist’s already hefty expenses list could hinder an industry which enjoys a lot of success and brings a healthy contribution to the Scottish economy.**

Edinburgh council leaders aren’t backing down from their proposals though, as they claim their effort has “the region’s cultural offering at its heart” and only aims at protecting such heritage. They also claim to be exploring further funding options, even as they hope to reach an agreement with the UK and Scotland’s governments shortly.

As for the Scottish government, their spokespeople insist that no such tax or levy is in the works at this time. If the council leaders have their way, the world will know the outcome of this controversial matter “in the coming weeks”.

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