**PRA joins the ATMIA in calling for Government to remove business rates on ATMs**

**London, 17 March 2015: -** The Petrol Retailers Association (PRA), which represents Britain’s 5,400 independent petrol filling stations, has joined the ATM Industry Association (ATMIA) in calling for ATMs to be exempt from Business Rates.

Brian Madderson, Chairman of the PRA, sees business rates exemption as a crucial matter, "The economics of running petrol forecourts are very fragile. That is why thousands have closed in the last few years with Experian Catalist confirming 900 independents had to withdraw from the sector in just five years from 2009 to 2013. A sensible concession by Local Authorities in relation to business rates on ATMs can help secure both the future of the forecourt and of local banking services".

Petrol forecourts are already important hubs for communities throughout the UK. Many now have excellent symbol brand convenience stores as well as fuel. Very often, these are the only shops serving the needs of the local residents, especially in more rural or isolated areas, situated away from towns and cities.

In many such areas, the last bank branch has already gone or is about to close. In these circumstances, a well- located petrol forecourt with a good convenience store can be the perfect site for an ATM. Parking is usually off road and easy for local residents. It makes perfect sense for them to pick up their cash, while refuelling and buying their groceries.

The importance of petrol forecourts as sites for ATMs will increase as the latest generation of sophisticated ATMs appears, incorporating a range of new services.

The new features on ATMs are likely to include; electronic image deposit of cheques, cash deposit and recycling, internet banking (possibly including video connections with bank staff) and a number of other services. These ATMs will need to do everything a bank branch can do if they are to be acceptable substitutes for branches.

For this to become a reality, it is vital that no obstacles are put in the way of petrol forecourts having ATMs. Two things are needed for this to work in practice: flexibility from Local Authority Planning Committees and the removal of Business Rates on ATMs.

Ron Delnevo, European Director of the ATM Industry Association, believes the business rate issue must be resolved. "There is no good in Local Authorities trying to cash in on attempts to replace the bank branches their local communities have lost. Sensible authorities, focused on the needs of their local residents for financial inclusion, will waive business rates to make the provision of new ATM-based banking services viable" said Delnevo.

The PRA and the ATMIA are united in calling for local authorities to ensure that ATMs at petrol forecourts are exempt from Business Rates.

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Notes for Editors

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**About the ATM Industry Association**

The ATM Industry Association is a global non-profit trade association, with over 5000 members in around 60 countries. Its mission is to promote ATM convenience, growth and usage worldwide; protect the ATM industry's assets, interests, good name and public trust; and provide education, best practices, political voice and networking opportunities for member organisations.

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The Retail Motor Industry represents the interests of operators in England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man providing sales and services to motorists and businesses.