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Dear David,

TRACK ACCESS RIGHTS ON THE EAST COAST MAIN LINE

I am writing with reference to the Office of Rail Regulation's ('ORR') letter dated 29 February 2008 on the above matter.

Freight on the East Coast Main Line ('ECML') has expanded substantially over the past 10 years with many coal services now operating between Scotland and Yorkshire via Edinburgh and the ECML. Inter-modal services have also increased between the East Coast Ports and the terminals at Doncaster, Wakefield and Leeds whilst the Channel Tunnel has enabled the opening up of direct links from Yorkshire and the North East to mainland Europe. The Port of Immingham has continued to expand and currently handles substantial volumes of imported coal as well as many other commodities including iron ore and steel. Infrastructure works to improve rail access to the Port of Hull will facilitate further expansion of rail freight from that location also.

In addition, there are also three Port expansion plans at Felixstowe, Harwich and London Gateway which will inevitably generate a requirement for even more freight paths on the ECML. Furthermore, as a result of the Felixstowe expansion, it is planned to undertake significant enhancements to the network to improve the loading gauge between Ipswich and Leeds (via ECML) to facilitate the passage of 9 foot 6 inch high ISO maritime containers to the terminals at Doncaster, Leeds and Wakefield.

To enable robust forecasts of future freight growth to be produced, the rail freight industry has worked together to establish processes which capture and analyse future freight growth across the network. The forecasts in respect of the ECML have been incorporated within the Freight and ECML Route Utilisation Strategies. Details of the many current and future rail freight schemes and developments underpinning these forecasts, including those specifically mentioned above are also included in these documents.

<http://www.ews-railway.co.uk>

continued ...

From the Freight and ECML Route Utilisation Strategies forecast growth for the ECML can be summarised as follows:

Kings Cross to Peterborough	10 to 15 extra freight trains per day
Peterborough to Doncaster	Over 15 extra freight trains per day
Doncaster to Colton Junction	10 to 15 extra freight trains per day
Colton Junction to Northallerton	5 to 10 extra freight trains per day

EWS trusts that the requirement for capacity to meet this expected freight growth will be taken into account by the ORR in any decision it makes when granting additional rights for access on the ECML.

In addition, at a more detailed level, EWS is already operating a number of additional services on the ECML under Spot Bid arrangements for which it is seeking firm access rights. Consequently, EWS is in the process of discussing its requirements in this respect with Network Rail. Some of the services are already included in proposed supplemental agreements which are at various stages of the production, consultation and approval process. A spreadsheet showing EWS's requirements in detail is attached to this letter. Given that the majority of these services use the ECML for only part of the journey, for ease of reference indication is given of which part of the ECML is being utilised in each case.

EWS hopes this information is helpful and should you require anything further, please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Oatway
Access Manager