



FREIGHT TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

Brian Hopkinson,
Office of Rail Regulation,
One Kemble Street,
London, WC2B 4AN

19th September 2007

Dear Brian,

CROSSRAIL Track Access Contract Option

Thank you for consulting us as a part of this process.

FTA petitioned against this Bill in September 2005 and appeared as a witness to the Committee in July 2006.

We understand that Network Rail has almost come to agreement with DfT on Network Rail's operation of the completed infrastructure (the tunnel infrastructure apparently remains a sticking point) and the "Access Option" securing a quantum of access rights for Crossrail, and other passenger and freight operators. This was to be supported by a service modelling programme, against which any iterations to service patterns and the planned infrastructure upgrades, such as the Acton dive-under, could be judged against the quantum of access rights.

Against this background therefore, FTA supported the removal of the clauses that were to restrict the ORR's powers, thereby meaning that changes to services by any operator would have to go through the "normal industry processes" so that Crossrail could then become a committed scheme as part of the RUS process, if the Access Option is agreed, for Royal Assent in April 2008. The grey area of course is the growth issue and Hutchison Ports UK are themselves seeking an Access Option given their commitments as part of planning consent to upgrade infrastructure and run a certain number of trains (regardless of operator) from the enlarged Felixstowe.

It is uppermost in our minds that the quantum of access rights for freight that are in the Access Option are based on the December 2005 Working Timetable, taking all actually run freight trains and a statistical mean of all short term moves (light engine etc). The unused freight paths are argued to allow for adequate growth, but Crossrail will not be open till 2017! FTA of course remains concerned on this point, and supports further detailed modelling work taking place to ensure that as per fully normal industry processes, a proper timetable can be constructed to allow access for existing freight services and to their terminals as well as growth under the committed developments of ports schemes. Without such guarantees, we would be unable to support this scheme.

Yours sincerely,

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