



Brian Hopkinson  
Track Access Executive  
Office of Rail Regulation  
One Kemble Street  
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WC2B 4AN

22 April 2008

Dear Brian

**Grand Central Track Access Contract: Proposed 7<sup>th</sup> Supplemental Agreement**

This letter forms the National Express East Coast response to your email of 27 March 2008.

National Express has a Franchise Obligation to deliver the SLC 2 timetable by December 2010. The SLC 2 timetable provides 5 trains in each off peak hour on the East Coast Main line. The National Express Franchise, based on the delivery of the SLC 2 timetable, is expected to pay a substantial premium to Government, reducing the level of taxpayer support needed for the railway as a whole.

We have noted the assessment in the ECML RUS, "Timetable analysis has shown that there is insufficient capacity on the main line between Peterborough and Doncaster to increase the level of off-peak LDHS service to 6tph and accommodate 1tph for today's level of freight services without worsening freight and passenger journey times and performance." (ECML RUS 6.7.4). Whilst National Express disagrees with this assessment, we object to the granting of any access rights which would prevent delivery of the SLC 2 timetable by December 2010.

In addition, the current operational performance of Grand Central appears to be significantly worse than other operators on ECML. We therefore request that ORR takes into account operational capability as part of any decision process.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Caltieri  
Head of Operations Development

