

31 October 2016

The Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Dear Mr Grayling

We are a group of academics and transport professionals who have serious doubts about HS2. We have read the transcript of your interview with Andrew Neil on the Sunday Politics programme and a letter that the Prime Minister wrote to the leader of Camden Council (both are attached). We consider that the arguments for HS2 in these documents are mistaken, and we believe that our concerns are shared by many professional engineers, economists, planners and railway managers. **We are therefore writing to request a meeting with you to explain those concerns.**

Both you and the Prime Minister stressed the need for extra capacity. You said that HS2 was needed to make space on the rest of the rail network for freight and for suburban and express services. We have evidence, however, that though extra capacity is needed on some parts of the rail system, it is not needed on this route; that HS2 would not help rail freight; and that so far from doing much to improve passenger services on the rest of the network, HS2 would create serious difficulties. We note that HS2 Ltd have refused to publish a credible timetable of future services.

The Prime Minister also said that HS2 was “a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebalance our country’s economy”. We agree that Britain’s economy is unbalanced and believe that reviving the economy of the north of England is a task deserving high priority. But we do not believe that HS2 is a good way of tackling it – in fact HS2 is more likely to make the problem worse.

We have major concerns about the effect of HS2 on the environment. It will not reduce carbon emissions from transport, although that claim figured prominently in the case originally put forward, and it will do serious and lasting damage to the terrestrial environment, including some of England’s most precious countryside. Finally, we do not think that the huge cost of this project can be justified, and we have serious doubts about the appraisal on which the promoter’s claim of a favourable benefit-cost ratio rests.

These are the points that we hope to develop at a meeting with you, along with alternatives that could achieve considerably more at less cost. Our arguments are expanded in two other attached documents, namely the report of an academic workshop and a technical note on timetable planning.

We look forward to your reply.

The complete list of 54 signatories is given overleaf.

Please reply to A.D.May@its.leeds.ac.uk and ptn@btconnect.com

Sent on behalf of the group by Jonathan Tyler
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David Bayliss OBE FREng FICE	Formerly London Transport Director of Planning
Chris Belk	Chairman of the Conservative Transport Group
Margaret Bell CBE FICE MCILT	Science City Professor of Transport and the Environment, Newcastle University
Andrew Bodman	Mechanical engineer and Director, HS2 Action Alliance
Anzir Boodoo MREs MILT	Urbanist and Transport Planner, Samuel L Foxton
Norman Bradbury	Deputy Director of Policy, Railfuture
John Cartledge FCILT MIHT	Formerly Head of Policy and Research at London TravelWatch
Mark Casson	Director of the Centre for Institutions and Economic History, University of Reading
Christopher Castles	Formerly partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers (leader of transport policy group)
Robert Cochrane	Visiting Professor, Imperial College and member of Eddington Friends Group
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Nicholas Falk Hon FRIBA	Founder Director of URBED (Urbanism, Environment and Design)
Les Fawcett	The Coventry Society
Nicola Forsdike	PhD researcher in railway management, University of York
Sir Christopher Foster	Formerly member of Board of Railtrack and chairman, Better Government Initiative
Stephen Gage	Professor of Innovative Technology, Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL
David Henderson	Formerly Head of Economics and Statistics at OECD and Reith Lecturer
Mayer Hillman PhD	Senior Fellow Emeritus, Policy Studies Institute, London
Paul Jowitt FREng FICE	Past President, the Institution of Civil Engineers, and Heriot Watt University
Quentin Macdonald CEng FIRSE	Systems Engineering Principal, HighSpeedUK
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John Marriott	Chartered Civil Engineer
Anthony May OBE FREng FICE	Emeritus Professor of Transport Engineering, ITS, University of Leeds
Philip Mortimer	Project Director, TruckTrain Developments Ltd and Director, IT2 Ltd
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Jonathan Tyler CMILT MTPS	Principal, Passenger Transport Networks [York]
Neale Upstone	Company Director, Cambridge
Michael Wand	Formerly Strategic Adviser to HSI route planning team, also hsnorthstart
Hilary Wharf	Transport economist, partner in WharfWeston Consultancy
John Whitelegg	Professor, School of the Built Environment, Liverpool John Moores University
Bill Wicksteed	Formerly a director of SQW Ltd
Michael Woodhouse	Electrical engineer; community representative - Ingestre with Tixall, Staffordshire