

National Assembly for Wales (“the Assembly”)

House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee and the Economic Development and
Transport Committee

Inquiry into the draft Transport (Wales) Bill

Evidence from the Association of Train Operating Companies -- ATOC.

DATE 16th June 2004

Ref 46

In responding to the invitation to give evidence, we will be speaking from the perspective of the Association of Train Operating Companies which represents all the existing franchised passenger operators.

We understand that the purpose of the Bill is to give the Assembly greater power to secure the transport services which will best serve the people of Wales at the most appropriate cost.

We support this objective. Transport, particularly rail transport, serves many markets -- local markets, regional markets, and long-distance markets. To be successful, rail must be responsive to local and regional concerns and priorities. To be successful in Wales, rail transport must be responsive to the concerns and priorities of the people of Wales, through the Welsh assembly. We would expect that the good relations which should thereby develop between the train operator(s) and the Assembly would be beneficial in tangible and intangible ways.

Clearly the work of the Assembly in this regard must be carried out in collaboration with the Strategic Rail Authority and in a manner consistent with the responsibility of the various parties for the flows of money involved.

Some issues: --

- 1 It appears from the Bill that the powers would be focused on the specification of services. They would not be focused on managing the franchise agreement itself. Is this the case?
- 2 Though the matter is some way off, if a new franchisee was required to be chosen, would the choice be made by the Welsh Assembly or the Strategic Rail Authority?
- 3 It is clearly necessary that the specification of services within Wales should not unreasonably impede cross-border services.
- 4 The powers should be carried out in such a way that a train operator serving Wales does not experience conflicting signals from two masters.

End