
Rail Freight Group

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James Davies,
Clerk to the Welsh Affairs Committee
House of Commons
7 Millbank
London SW1A 0AA

John Grimes, Clerk to the Economic Development and Transport Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff CF99 1NA

Dear Sirs,

Committee Consultation on draft Transport (Wales) Bill

The two Committees kindly invited the Rail Freight Group to respond to the consultation on the draft Transport (Wales) Bill.

The Rail Freight Group is the representative body of the rail freight industry in the UK. Its objective is to encourage the growth of rail freight transport.

RFG generally welcomes the Bill and, in particular, clause 1 (2) (b), the duty to promote and encourage the use of transport facilities for freight. We welcome this because it clearly gives the Assembly a locus in considering the needs for freight transport in Wales.

However, we would like to see the Bill go further and add a clause to promote the use of the railways for the carriage of freight. The wording that we would recommend is that contained in Section 205 of the 2000 Railways Act in respect of the Strategic Rail Authority. For this Bill, it should apply to the Assembly. The wording from Section 205 (a) and (c) would put a 'purpose' to 'promote the use of the railways for the carriage of passenger and goods' and 'contribute to the development of an integrated system of transport for...goods.' It may also be useful to include the wording from Section 205 (b) 'to secure the development of the rail network'.

We also believe that there would be merit in including some words about encouraging environmentally friendly forms of transport.

I hope that these comments are helpful, and that the Committees will recommend such changes in their Report. We are of course at the disposal of the Committees if they would like further information.

Yours sincerely

Tony Berkeley
Chairman