

John Swinney MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth
Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

16 December 2010

Dear Mr Swinney

FREIGHT FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING IN SCOTLAND

We are writing to express our concern about the announcement in the recent draft Scottish Budget that funding for Freight Facilities Grants (FFGs) is planned to cease.

Rail freight is an effective way of transporting goods across the country and is vital to the economy. It provides a sustainable and safer way of transporting heavy loads than roads, moving over 100 million tonnes of goods every year, including supermarket deliveries, coal to our power stations and removing waste from our cities.

FFGs have been at the forefront of allowing rail freight to enter new markets, with grant aid removing a major investment barrier to rail freight growth. FFGs have helped make progress on a wide range of policy objectives for various administrations during the lifetime of the Scottish Parliament. Growth in rail freight operations has significant benefits in terms of congestion reductionⁱ, while also reducing carbon, as a freight train can emit 70 per cent less CO₂ emissions than the equivalent road journeyⁱⁱ. It also saves lives – lorries are responsible for a disproportionate number of roadⁱⁱⁱ casualties so reducing their numbers will avoid a significant number of deaths and serious injuries each year.

We are concerned that the sudden withdrawal of all FFG funding will have a negative effect on the economy, the environment and carbon reduction targets, and therefore urge you to keep the scheme open with a realistic budget to encourage even greater mode shift from road to rail (and sea).

In particular, in the short term FFGs could target particular corridors, like the A9, with modal shift potential which suffer from serious road congestion, pollution and exposure to road accidents.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our proposal with you

Yours sincerely



Stephen Joseph OBE
CEO
Campaign for Better Transport



Colin Howden
CEO
Transform Scotland



ⁱ An average freight train can remove 50 HGVs from our roads and an aggregates train can remove up to 160 HGVs – Network Rail 2010

ⁱⁱ Rail freight produces 70% less carbon dioxide than the equivalent road journey DfT Logistics Perspective Dec 2008 P8section10

ⁱⁱⁱ Reduces the exposure to road accidents as long distance HGVs are over 3 times more likely to be involved in fatal accidents than cars due to a combination of size, lack of proper enforcement of drivers hours, vehicle overloading and differing foreign operating standards. Source: Road Statistics 2008, Tables 3.2 and 3.6, Road Freight Statistics 2008 Section 5, both UK Department for Transport