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12 May 2014

Derek Mackay MSP
Minister for Local Government and Planning
Scottish Government

(By email to scottish.ministers@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Minister

NPF3 and Rail Freight

As you will be aware, the ICI Committee's report on the draft NPF3 highlighted rail freight's potential to make a real contribution towards meeting wider objectives to enhance connectivity and sustainability. In response to stakeholders' concerns that rail freight may not be receiving a level of consideration comparable to that afforded to sea freight – with three sea freight but no rail freight related projects proposed for National Development status – the report recommended that, in future iterations, rail freight should be seriously considered for National Development status.

Given the scale of rail freight involvement in Scotland's export trade (and the domestic intermodal business, in which ports have little or no role), our three organisations share the concern that this crucial sector of Scotland's trade infrastructure is entirely absent from the Scottish Government's strategic programme of National Developments, in light of:

- Scottish Government ambitions to rebalance and reindustrialise the economy
- Scottish Government and industry targets for overall and sectoral export growth
- the Scottish Parliament's world-leading climate change commitments
- national transport policy to promote – and industry interest in – modal shift
- the significant environmental and social benefits of modal shift
- projections for continued strong growth in rail freight over the long-term.

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Rail freight can play a key part in supporting growth in freight at ports, but the modes also compete for business. Both sea and rail freight (unlike road haulage) are critically dependent on terminal facilities in order to provide access to their route infrastructure – and it is illogical, inconsistent and unfair for one of the two to feature prominently in the list of geographically-specific National Developments while the other has none.

We support long-term development at key ports. However, in light of the parity of scoring of RFG's rail freight National Development proposal with two of the proposed sea freight projects in NPF3, we would urge you to add the RFG proposal to enhance 'the strategic freight connectivity of Scotland's inter-urban rail network' to the final framework.

We would be pleased to meet with you if you felt this would assist.

Yours sincerely



David Spaven

Scottish Representative
Rail Freight Group



Gareth Williams

Director of Policy
SCDI



Phil Matthews

Chair
Transform Scotland

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