

IN PARLIAMENT

HOUSE OF COMMONS

SESSION 2013–14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

PETITION

Against – on merits – Praying to be heard by Counsel, &c.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION of Mr Alec Howard

SHEWETH as follows:-

1. A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House entitled “A Bill to make provision for a railway between Euston in London and a junction with the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre in Staffordshire, with a spur from Water Orton in Warwickshire to Curzon Street in Birmingham; and for connected purposes”
2. The Bill is presented by Mr Secretary McLoughlin, supported by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary Theresa May, Secretary Vince Cable, Secretary Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary Eric Pickles, Secretary Owen Paterson, Secretary Edward Davey, and Mr Robert Goodwill.
3. Your Petitioner is concerned with the detailed implementation of the Bill in Clause 1-36 setting out the Bill’s objectives in relation to the construction and operation of the railway mentioned above.

4. Your Petitioner is Mr Alec Howard of Middlesteads, Church Lane, Mixbury, Brackley, NN13 5RP. Your Petitioner owns this property and has lived in this house for 6 years with his wife and four children. The proposed line is approximately 400m to the North East of the property and intersects both the road and cycle routes that your Petitioner's wife and children take daily to school in Westbury, where Your Petitioner's wife has been a teacher for 16 years and where the children are pupils.
5. Your Petitioner and their rights, interests and property are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
6. Your Petitioner is concerned about the impact of the operational noise of the railway on his property which is highlighted in the Environmental Statement as suffering a 'moderate adverse impact' once the line is running.

It is fortunate that the majority of the line runs through cuttings as it passes near the village of Mixbury; however there is one short section of approximately 200m where it runs over an 8m embankment near Hollow Barn. This is clearly the main source of the noise pollution for the parish of Mixbury and in particular your Petitioner's property, which is only 400m from this location. Despite repeated meetings with HS2 requesting mitigation options, no sound proofing has been included in the proposed design. This is in complete contrast to the approach that has been taken to the viaduct over the Great Ouse just half a mile to the north, where a similar source of noise from a raised section of track over a watercourse, which is a similar distance from dwellings, has been mitigated by the inclusion of a sound barrier.

In addition, the embankment near Hollow Barn will also have a significant impact on Bridleway 303/4, where your Petitioner's children regularly ride their pony. The bridleway is in direct line of sight of the track and passes within less than 100m from the line. This point also falls within the highest projected noise zone (>65DB). The combination of this burst of very loud noise and the sudden appearance of trains emerging from the cuttings at either end of the embankment is very likely to terrify horses on the bridleway and therefore endanger the lives of your Petitioner's children.

7. Your Petitioner requests that additional mitigation is added to the embankment near Hollow Barn in order to reduce the noise impact on your Petitioner's property and to protect your Petitioner's children as they enjoy the local environment.

8. For the foregoing and connected reasons your Petitioner respectfully submits that, unless the Bill is amended as proposed above, so far affecting your Petitioner, should not be allowed to pass into law.

9. There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioner and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioner.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore humbly pray your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that they may be heard by their Counsel, Agents and witnesses in support of the allegations of this Petition against so much of the Bill as affects the property, rights and interests of your Petitioner and in support of such other clauses and provisions as may be necessary or expedient for their protection, or that such other relief may be given to your Petitioner in the premises as your Honourable House shall deem meet.

AND your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

Signed Alec Howard

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Against the Bill – On Merits – By Counsel &c

Alec Howard

Mr Howard is a member of the Conservative Party and is a resident of the constituency of

West Midlands.