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IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013-14

HIGH SPEED RAIL
(LONDON-WEST MIDLANDS)
BILL

CHRISTINE HARRIS

AGAINST, By Counsel, &c.

Petitioner in Person

IN PARLIAMENT
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HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON – WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

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 Christine Harris

SHEWETH as follows:-

- 1 A Bill (hereinafter referred to as “the Bill”) has been introduced and is now pending in your honourable House intituled “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 Old Oak Common in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham to a junction with the Channel Tunnel Rail Link at York Way in the London Borough of Islington and 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.

Relevant Clauses of the Bill

- 3 Clauses 1 to 36 set out the Bill’s objectives in relation to the construction and operation of the railway mentioned in paragraph 1 above. They include provision for the construction of works, highways and road traffic matters, the compulsory acquisition of land and other provisions relating to the use of land, planning permission, heritage issues, trees and noise. They include clauses which would disapply and modify various enactments relating to special categories of land including burial grounds, consecrated land, commons and open spaces, and other matters, including overhead lines, water, building regulations and party walls, street works and the use of lorries.
- 4 Clauses 37 to 42 of the Bill deal with the regulatory regime for the railway.

- 5 Clauses 43 to 65 of the Bill set out a number of miscellaneous and general provisions, including provision for the appointment of a nominated undertaker ("the Nominated Undertaker") to exercise the powers under the Bill, transfer schemes, provisions relating to statutory undertakers and the Crown, provision about the compulsory acquisition of land for regeneration, reinstatement works and provision about further high speed railway works. Provision is also made about the application of Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.
- 6 The works proposed to be authorised by the Bill ("the Authorised Works") are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedule 1 to the Bill. They consist of scheduled works, which are described in Schedule 1 to the Bill and other works, which are described in clause 2 of the Bill.

Your Petitioner

- 7 Your petitioner is the owner of The White House, Little Missenden, Amersham, Bucks, HP7 0QX. This property, your petitioner's home, is a Grade II listed house in the heart of a quiet Chilterns village. Little Missenden is a conservation area and within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Your petitioner's property is situated between the proposed Little Missenden ventilation shaft and the Mantles Wood tunnel exit and is bypassed very closely by the A413, which is designated as an access route for works traffic during the construction of HS2. Your petitioner will therefore be affected by noise, dust, air pollution and construction traffic for some years and irrevocable damage to the AONB.
- 8 Your petitioner and her interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

Your Petitioner's concerns

- 9 Your petitioner is seriously concerned about damage to the Chilterns AONB and the fact that HS2 Ltd., in proposing this route, appears to have ignored the statutory duty of protection of an AONB as set out in Section 85 of the Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000. Your petitioner requests that the route of HS2 be realigned in order that it avoids the Chilterns AONB.
- 10 The proposed route through the Chilterns AONB will result in the destruction of ancient woodland and hedgerows at Mantles Wood and overhead line equipment will be visible from Little Missenden. In addition, your petitioner is concerned about the alteration of the landscape arising from 'sustainable placement' as well as noise, and believes that HS2, as proposed above ground, will permanently damage the nature of the AONB.

- 11 Your petitioner's enjoyment of the AONB will thus be detrimentally affected and so will the enjoyment of her children, grandchildren and future generations. This is surely contrary to the purpose of the AONB designation which is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape, meet the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and have regard for the interests of those who live and work there.
- 12 Your petitioner therefore supports Chiltern District Council's proposals for an extended bored tunnel throughout the AONB, which in your Petitioner's opinion would alleviate the detrimental impact that the proposed railway will otherwise have on the AONB.
- 13 If a revised route for HS2 is deemed unsuitable, then your petitioner requests that that the present proposed route through the Chilterns AONB be amended so that the present so called 'Chilterns tunnel' be extended to a point North of Wendover, as detailed in the CRAG-T2 mitigation proposal, which was deemed environmentally beneficial in the Environmental Statement. This mitigation would not avoid all the damage to the Chilterns AONB (for example: ventilations shafts would still be required), however it would massively reduce the damage to the heart of the AONB at Mantles Wood and much of the mitigation to minimise the impacts, such as those exemplified below, of both the construction and operation of HS2 would not be required.
- 14 Should neither the route be amended, nor an extended Chilterns tunnel be acceptable, then your petitioner is particularly concerned about the impact of construction traffic along the A413 from Great Missenden, on the Amersham by-pass and up to and including the junction with the A355, which forms the access to the M40 at Beaconsfield. This route is already busy during peak times and is the main route to and from London from this area.
- 15 Your petitioner is seriously concerned that access to and from Little Missenden will become difficult because of increased traffic on the A413 and that the road through the village will become a short cut for traffic trying to avoid the A413. This will be particularly dangerous for parents dropping off and collecting very young children at the Village Hall and Little Missenden Infant School. It will also deter walkers and visitors to the village and thus have a detrimental effect on the trade in the village pubs.
- 16 Your petitioner is concerned about how construction traffic will affect her daily life and her ability to go about her daily business with relative ease. She is concerned about being disturbed by construction noise and traffic at weekends and during the evening, thus affecting her quality of life and health during the construction process.

- 17 Your petitioner is also concerned that traffic congestion on the A413 will affect emergency ambulance services to the Amersham/Little Missenden area from Stoke Mandeville A&E Department, as this is the only direct route between the two. This could put the petitioner, her family and many elderly friends in the village at risk.
- 18 In order to reduce the construction traffic on the A413 your petitioner respectfully requests that HS2 Ltd. be required to move spoil from the spoil handling areas by rail rather than by road.
- 19 Your petitioner further requests that in order to reduce congestion in the area, construction traffic movement be restricted to the period 09.00 to 15.00 during weekdays and from 9.00 to 13.00 on Saturday mornings only during the weekend.
- 20 Your petitioner respectfully requests that HS2 Ltd. undertakes to provide suitable emergency medical cover while construction is taking place. This could be in the form of medical staff permanently stationed in the area with an air ambulance available at all times to make the trip to Stoke Mandeville.
- 21 There are other clauses and provisions of the Bill, which, if passed into law as they now stand will prejudicially affect your Petitioners and their rights, interests and property and for which no adequate provision is made to protect your Petitioners.

YOUR PETITIONER therefore humbly prays your Honourable House that the Bill may not be allowed to pass into law as it now stands and that she may be heard by her 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 her 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 Christine Harris
