

PETITION AGAINST A PRIVATE BILL

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013-14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Against – on merits – Praying to be heard in Person

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

THE HUMBLE PETITION of JOHN AND ROSEMARY PARRY

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 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.
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 are specified in clauses 1 and 2 of and Schedules 1 and 2 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 and Schedules 2 and 3 to the Bill.
7. We write as owner-occupiers for over forty years at our home at 31 Mornington Terrace NW1 7RS, as well as retired business owners of a small local ceramic tile distributor "Tower Ceramics Ltd" located at 89-95 Parkway NW1 7PP, which is also in the immediate vicinity of the proposed HS2 project. We have invested many years of our lives and substantial sums of money in this immediate area. We feel that compared to the environment we first encountered in the 1970s on arriving, the neighbourhood has been transformed into a thriving, innovative and renowned part of London, and yet can be surprisingly tranquil given the influence of open spaces such as Regents Park. The progress made over these years is now under severe threat of reversal and ruination given the devastating impact of the proposed HS2 plan. The safeguarding zone ends at the front of our private property and therefore the concessions and assistance proffered to other affected parties along other parts of the route do not apply, despite our property being closer to the work site than these other parties.
8. Your Petitioners and their interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioners object for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
9. Our concerns in relation to the construction of HS2 in the local area are many. We share the view of millions who doubt the validity of the cost-benefit analysis undertaken before there was a full appreciation of the huge impact of improvements in internet access and speed on business, and the reduction in need for travel in many cases where videoconferencing has come to the fore. Moreover an improvement of thirty minutes in travel time (as has been reported on the proposed London to Birmingham route) implies the time on board a train is somehow dead, whereas of course the reality is that the vast majority of passengers are using or could use some form of connected device

and work can continue irrespective of their location. The projected sums of money required for the completion of HS2, growing as they have with every estimate, could be reallocated in very effective ways, not least in housebuilding which would seem to be a chronic and yet very current crisis for the country as a whole. Beyond general criticisms and in terms of impact to Camden specifically, we are deeply concerned about the detriment to our current quality of life should the HS2 project proceed. We are both in our mid-seventies, and had intended to remain living in our Camden home until the end of our days. We are now faced with potentially an impossible position – to remain and suffer the effects of construction site noise, increased pollution from project-related vehicles and the consequent congestion, interruption to sleep given the prospect of a 24 hour works schedule – or to move reluctantly, and yet accept a deeply discounted price on our house (without compensation), the fruit of a lifetime's hard work and considerable investment, and suffer as well as this financial loss the emotional upheaval of relocation at this stage of life. We have broader concerns in terms of impact to the prosperity of the area, which as retired yet still very active local business owners we feel we are able to comment on given forty years' experience. Camden has become a worldwide cultural focus point, and without question its ability to attract tourists and related income is jeopardised by this scheme. Beyond the direct impact of the route to parts of Camden Lock and Camden Market, the effects of construction traffic and local disruption will make for a very difficult if not impossible trading existence in the vicinity. In a time where the high street has been designated an endangered specie, a project such as this will almost certainly destroy a significant number of local businesses who given the long-lasting recession have only just been able to survive. The essence of Camden and its business is its individuality; whilst a chain store might make a quick decision to exit the area with only moderate impact to its company group, a unique local business faced with this prospect would be more likely to cease trading than accept the costs of moving and the risks associated with losing a local customer base. Camden is exposed to a genuine threat that it will lose its identity during a ten year long construction plan; the legacy of HS2 would simply be catastrophe for Camden business.

10. In our view there is a strong case for re-evaluating the HS2 scheme as a whole, and compare the potential yields from investment of these billions of pounds in other projects such as housebuilding, road improvements, NHS and education. With Camden specifically in mind, there should be a full evaluation of the possibility of termination of the route at Old Oak Common, or alternatively a change of route to allow the line to terminate at St. Pancras/Kings Cross and therefore link effectively with HS1; we would also expect a considerable reduction in cost by bringing the route in via an area where there is less conurbation and existing underground services.

In addition a reassessment of the limits on compensation according to distance from the works site should be undertaken.

11. 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 PETITIONERS 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 Themselves 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 Petitioners 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.

Signed John Parry.....

Signed Rosemary Parry