

IN PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
SESSION 2013–14

HIGH SPEED RAIL (LONDON - WEST MIDLANDS) BILL

Against – on merits – Praying to be heard [in Person], &c.

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

THE HUMBLE PETITION of KATHARINE BLIGH

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. Your Petitioner Katharine Bligh has lived at 62b Priory Road, London NW6 3RE, which is quite near the proposed Vent Shaft at Alexandra Place, for thirty four years. Your Petitioner brought up her children at that address and now her three young grandchildren regularly come to stay for a few days or a week or more. Often accompanied by her grandchildren, she walks almost every day (and sometimes several times a day) across the Belsize Road/Loudoun Road roundabout to go to local shops, hairdresser, library, cinema, Swiss Cottage, Primrose Hill, or Regents Park and to visit friends on the Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate. She also frequently travels on the No 31 bus to Chalk Farm and Camden Town. Your Petitioner, therefore, would be severely affected by the construction of the Alexandra Vent Shaft and after it is built she will be unable to access the Estate from Alexandra Place.
8. Your Petitioner, her grandchildren and her interests are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitioner objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.
9. The Bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to undertake works of construction which are estimated to take ten years to complete and will include lorry movements, creation of dust and pollution, poor air quality and adverse visual impact leading to serious environmental and health issues. Your Petitioner already suffers from a virtually permanent chesty cough which would be exacerbated by these construction works and she is concerned too for the health of her grandchildren whose

overexposure to such a polluting atmosphere could lead to them developing respiratory problems such as asthma.

10. The proposal to close Adelaide Road and divert the No 31 bus route leading to frequent delays and the build up of traffic in the surrounding residential streets would be a serious hindrance to your Petitioner, who, apart from walking depends entirely on public transport. The diversion and delays would expose your Petitioner to yet more harmful pollution and take up too much of her valuable time turning what should be a pleasant expedition into a nightmare.

11. The proposed demolition of the shops and services in Langtry Walk would be particularly injurious to your Petitioner, friends and family who use the hairdresser, the dry cleaners and the launderette. Her friends who live on the Estate use the launderette all the time as they have no washing machine at home. Equally other shops such as the convenience stores and the fish and chips shop would be a great loss.

12. Your Petitioner objects to the powers that are proposed to be provided by the Bill to the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker and respectfully submits that the Bill should be amended or undertakings should be required to be given so that HS2 Limited, the Secretary of State and/or the Nominated Undertaker must review the project and its related works activities by considering their cumulative impacts on area communities and on the environment. In reviewing the project your Petitioner respectfully submits that alternative options to the so called 'Option 8', which is the worst possible option, should be considered. In particular your Petitioner draws your Honourable House's attention to the option of locating the terminus of HS2 at Old Oak Common which has several advantages over Euston. It would follow that there would be no tunnel and therefore no need for a Vent Shaft at Alexandra Place. Apart from a shorter tunnel (if one is needed at all) and therefore less Vent Shafts, a station at Old Oak Common would link HS2 directly to central London, the City and HS1 through Crossrail. It would relieve passenger demand at Euston Station which is already under great pressure. It would save the demolition of so many hundreds of homes, businesses and communities affecting thousands of people around Euston and beyond. Less destruction would mean less pollution and therefore it would be less hazardous to health. Your Petitioner respectfully submits that a terminus at Old Oak Common could be constructed without the need to demolish a single home or business. It would also be far less costly. Your Petitioner notes that the Bill provides for new stations to be constructed for HS2 in several major cities such as Birmingham and Manchester and respectfully submits that a new station for HS2 should be constructed in London too. When they have reviewed the project, HS2 Limited, the Secretary of State and/or the Nominated Undertaker need to suggest the resulting necessary changes before works design and construction strategies have been finalised or construction contractors employed.

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

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 herself 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 Katharine Bligh ...

