

IN PARLIAMENT

1368

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 [GODFREY EDWARD LAW]

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. 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 has lived at 7 Barn Road, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffordshire, WS15 4TA, for sixteen years, with his wife Stephanie and two children. Both children have completed university courses and our daughter, a forensic scientist, now lives in Derby, whilst our Son, is completing a PhD in cancer related research at Leicester University. I particularly relate to our children in regard to this petition, for the following reason. We have lived through several years with the conversion of two rail tracks at the rear of our property, to four, for the West Coast Main Line. We were unaware of this conversion, prior to purchasing our house. This caused health issues, both physical and mental, to my wife and I and to our children, who were studying, to get to university. These issues affected their school work, culminating in them having to live away from home, for a period, to concentrate on their studies. I am 68 years old and my wife is 61 years. We both still work, I part time, my wife full time, as we still have to financially support our children. Whilst our house will not be demolished, it is within 60 metres of the line. In the summer, it is uncomfortable to sit in the garden, due to frequent train noise and vibration, despite the builders of the West Coast Mainline, telling us this wouldn't be a problem. Construction traffic will be operating both on the line and on the access road and site the other side of the track from us.

8. Your Petitioner and his [rights, interests and/or property] are injuriously affected by the Bill, to which your Petitione objects for reasons amongst others, hereinafter appearing.

The Bill includes powers for the Secretary of State and the Nominated Undertaker to do construction works which are estimated to take 10 years to complete and will include lorry movements, the creation of dust and noise, poor air quality, and 24 hour working. This will inevitably lead to severe sleep deprivation for my wife and I at a time we will be wanting to retire to enjoy the fruits of our labour.

It is clearly evident that this disruption, when compared to what we suffered with the construction of the West Coast Main Line, will affect our health much more severely than before. Our hope to move to a smaller property on retirement will be compromised, as no one in their right mind, would buy our house because of the close proximity to the HS2 construction. Noise, dust, vibration, will be a major factor in our lives because of this construction and beyond. We still don't know, whether or not, HM Government, would be willing to purchase our house, as the boundaries of information in this respect seem to keep changing. Communication to us by the Government or HS2, has been severely lacking in its clarity in this matter. There is no doubt that all my family suffered in several ways, during the construction of the West Coast Mainline. This will be magnified several time over by HS2 construction, with regard to noise, vibration, light pollution from work site and crane use, dust, probable 24 hour working. All these matters need to be mitigated and addressed by HS2 directly with us.

9. 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 submit that the Bill should be amended or undertakings should be required so that HS2 Limited, the Secretary of State and/or the Nominated Undertaker must review the construction strategy for the project and its related works by considering their cumulative impacts on communities. And they need to suggest necessary changes from the results of that review before works design and construction strategies have been finalised or construction contractors employed.

HS2 propose a permanent access road off Spode Avenue/Tuppenhurst Lane, to their workshops and site, passing the gates of Hayes Meadow Primary School, a feature that apparently will remain after construction is completed. This is a recipe for disaster, so close to a school, where it is likely accidents will occur. The West Coast Main Line constructors, used a site by the line at the rear of the school grounds, which they accessed along a road they built, running the length of the track from the

direction of Shaw Lane/Tuppenhurst Lane, not affecting the school in any way. This needs to be considered.

It is proposed that there is likely to be some road closures/diversions on our road from the village, (B5014) towards Lichfield, i.e. Seedy Mill to Handsacre. This is our main access to work for most residents of Armitage/Handsacre, to Birmingham, Lichfield, Burton on Trent, Tamworth. It is a main bus route and serves as an access route to Rugeley Power Station, for many workers. Any diversion, will add considerable time to our journeys and inevitable congestion. An alternative use of Shaw Lane is appropriate.

A soil mound is due to be built A515/Wood End Lane. A guarantee from HS2 is needed to the effect that this would be removed as soon as possible following construction.

A great deal of construction traffic (HGVs) will be using our roads, which are not built to accommodate such excesses. I particularly refer to Wood End Lane. This is a heavily used cut through, from the A38 at Fradley, to the A515 and via our village, to Rugeley, Stafford and the M6. Wood End Lane is too narrow now to take the current HGV traffic. The HGVs fill the carriageway in places. Accidents have occurred because of this and the poor advance views because of the hidden curves and bends. A second road should be built or Wood End Lane widened, to accommodate this extra traffic. Fradley is a huge business park, which, along with Tescos and Palletways and a large Haulage Company, has to accommodate the largest of HGVs. The addition of HS2 traffic, is going to cause more problems and compromise further the safety of road users in Wood End Lane.

Our experience from the building of the West Coast Main Line, promotes the following issues, that should be addressed prior to work beginning;-

- a) **Noise.** 24 hour and weekend working not to be permitted or to be severely limited and residents to be advised regularly, in respect of such matters taking place. Consideration to be given to improving the current fencing, to that of a noise abating 'Sandwich type!' This was promised by the West Coast Mainline Construction, but didn't materialise.
- b) **Vibration.** To be linked to the noise issue and kept to a minimum.
- c) **Dust.** Every effort to be made to keep dust to a minimum on a daily basis.
- d) **Environmental Impact.** Not enough consideration has, from scanning HS2 documents, been given to harm to the environment, including the affect on wildlife, landscape, water courses, in relation to Handsacre. This needs to be fully addressed and the villagers consulted and updated in this regard.

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

11. 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: Mr GODFREY EDWARD LAW

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "GODFREY EDWARD LAW", is written over a faint, horizontal, wavy line that serves as a signature guide.

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