



ASLEF's Response to the HS2 Draft Environmental Statement

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train driver's union representing approximately 18,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. One of the main benefits of high speed rail is the positive effect it would have in regard to Britain's carbon emissions. High Speed rail will promote rail travel, reduce domestic flight, increase capacity for passengers and also create more capacity for Rail Freight leading to less lorries on our roads.
3. HS2's environmental benefits must be seen not only in the context of improving inter-urban connectivity, but within the scope of carbon reduction through reduced car journeys and domestic aviation. The Government has a legal commitment to reduce CO2 emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050.
4. The surface transport industry is responsible for 21% of the UK's carbon emissions with transport as a whole responsible for about 33%. Transport is also the fastest growing polluter in the UK. However rail emits just 2% of these transport emissions whilst road is responsible for 19% of all emissions and 55% of transport emissions.

5. The EU is currently exploring proposals to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from transport by 60% over the next 40 years by replacing short haul flights with high speed rail.
6. Rail must therefore play a significant role in preventing man made catastrophic climate change by taking passengers and freight out of cars, lorries and planes. Increasing rail capacity and making the existing rail sector greener is therefore a priority.
7. ASLEF have continuously said that for HS2 to truly fulfil its potential, it must link to Heathrow and continue to Scotland. By linking to Heathrow airport, domestic connecting flights which use Heathrow as a main hub for international journeys will be reduced. It is important to remember that travel by HSR produces one-quarter the emissions of an equivalent trip by air, taking into account the average loadings typically achieved on each mode.
8. A new high speed line could have a significantly positive effect for Rail Freight by relieving capacity on the East Coast and West Coast Mainlines for the use of Freight services.
9. HGVs are responsible for 20% of carbon dioxide emissions from all domestic transport and road freight now accounts for 8% of UK carbon dioxide emissions. Carbon dioxide emissions from HGVs represent approximately a third of total CO₂ emissions from transport in the EU in 2010. Therefore the fact that per tonne carried, rail produces 70% less carbon dioxide than road transport must be an important consideration.
10. ASLEF therefore believes that the government must guarantee that much of the capacity relieved thanks HS2 must be made available to the freight industry.

11. ASLEF therefore supports HS2 on environmental grounds but believes that its true potential will not be achieved until it links to Heathrow as well as crossing the border into Scotland. It must also allow rail freight to share in the increased capacity that it will bring.

Mick Whelan
General Secretary
ASLEF
77 St John Street
London
EC1M 4NN