

Department for
Transport

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Dear Hilary,

Thank you for your letter of 24 August to the Secretary of State, concerning high speed rail. I have been asked to respond.

As you are aware, the Government supports high speed rail as part of its programme for low carbon economic growth for the UK. However, at this stage, no final decisions have been taken on whether and how its proposals for high speed rail should be taken forward. An important initial step in establishing the Government's policy will be to consult with the public and interested parties on these issues. We expect to be in a position to run such a consultation in the early part of 2011.

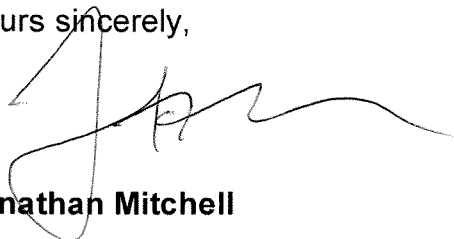
The consultation will cover, amongst other things, the kind of issues which your letter raises. I would, therefore, encourage you and any other interested party to make the fullest possible representation to this consultation in due course. The Government will reflect on the responses before making any final decisions on its policy on high speed rail.

In the run up to the consultation the team here will need to prioritise time on getting the consultation and associated materials in place. You will appreciate that as a result it will not always be possible for either DfT or HS2 Ltd's teams to agree every request for meetings or to always provide detailed responses to correspondence.

In advance of the consultation HS2 Ltd is expecting to hold a small number of seminars on its technical work. HS2 Ltd will invite a wide range of interested parties to these seminars including local action groups and I am sure that the HS2 Action Alliance will be included in this.

Thank you for your interest in high speed rail and for your constructive input.

Yours sincerely,



Jonathan Mitchell