

The Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP  
Secretary of State for Transport Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

Cc: Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer

12 September 2024

Dear Secretary of State,

**Lower Thames Crossing – call by businesses for DCO approval**

We are writing to express our support for the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) as this project reaches a crucial stage in the planning process.

Roads are a vital part of the national transport system – some 90% of journeys in England are made by road, accounting for over 440 billion vehicle miles per annum. 80% of UK freight transport is via road and 70% is on the strategic road network.

The Dartford Crossing is one of the most congested roads in the country. Its unreliability creates significant costs for our economy, estimated at £200 million per year due to goods stuck in traffic and decreased productivity. This persistent congestion is a financial burden and a deterrent to businesses considering investment in the region. For Britain's exporters, the uncertainty associated with the Dartford Crossing is untenable. Every time they need to use the crossing, it is akin to a gamble, and our exporters cannot afford to operate under such unpredictable conditions.

The Lower Thames Crossing promises to provide much-needed relief and reliability, offering a transformative £40 billion boost to the UK economy. A commitment to the development of this vital national infrastructure would not only expedite these economic benefits but also enable the government to explore private financing options. This approach could deliver the advantages of the new crossing without adversely impacting the government's balance sheet.

If consented, the LTC will become one of the UK's largest construction projects. Within months, there could be spades in the ground and workers being upskilled, with the new road potentially operational by 2030/32. Such progress is critical for the logistics industry, exporters and other businesses, all of which need the certainty that this project promises.

The Lower Thames Crossing is not just a local project but a national imperative that will bolster our economic resilience and growth. A decision by 4<sup>th</sup> October is crucial. The logistics industry and the wider UK business community cannot afford to endure another 15 years of uncertainty and congestion-related challenges.

If consented this year, construction will have started in time for the next general election, and it will be fully operational by the following one. Delivering the LTC will be a symbol of the new government's commitment to growth and productivity.

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