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Dept for Transport
Transport & Works Act Orders Unit
Dept of Transport
Zone 1/14-18, Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London, SW1P 4DR

Dear Sirs

5th May 2018

Re: Proposed Rail Link between Bodiam and Robertsbridge

I am writing regarding the above proposal and have several concerns associated with the intended link between Bodiam and Robertsbridge.

The B2244 is an extremely busy and fast road which is limited to the national speed limit which is not policed. The majority of vehicles travel up that road far beyond the speed limit. There have been numerous accidents and at least one fatality on this road, the majority at the site where the rail crossing is to be located. My property along with six others are built very close to this road and very close to the intended rail crossing.

I arranged a visit with the local council as we have difficulty seeing out of our drive due to signage. I was advised simply that it was my fault for choosing to live there and it would be far too expensive to change or alter it

So how do you propose to slow the traffic without further increasing the risk of accident and noise pollution? And where do you propose to put up informative signage? An average speed camera, would I think be self-funding and resolve that problem for everyone including the emergency services, and be warranted.

The other issue is queuing stationary traffic. I would have to assume for safety reasons that the stop time for the crossing would be 2 minutes? That will mean queuing traffic backing up past our homes pumping out diesel and petrol fumes and noise pollution which most definitely will have a negative benefit regarding the health of those living in the vicinity, not to mention the fact that there will be billowing smoke from the steam trains which will not be very pleasant at all. Most especially in the summer months when people like to have their windows open.

Then there is the issue of where the line is to be sited... it is planned to run right up the middle of a fabulous corridor of our native trees including willow hawthorn, ash and some oak with wild garlic, bluebells and many other plant species.. there is a badger set and fox dens and many small rodents and over wintering bumble bee homes. The huge array of flowers offered by the trees and shrubs help sustain our bee population and it is really very important to keep this.

Looking at what they have done the other side of the road the treeline has been decimated and a small hedge planted as compensation.

This in no way compensates for what has been taken away. I understand that this is about to happen in the very near future right in the middle of the nesting season for our wild birds. If Farmers who provide us with items of real value are not allowed to take out hedging and trees, how can this be allowed? This is unacceptable on every level. Surely this is breach of the law at this time of year?

We are also sited in an SSI. This must stand for something. We have a large colony of long eared Brown Bats and this is their specific habitat and roosting area. It must be a breaching their right as a protected species?

This is also our only barrier to help stem the noise pollution from the camp site. To add to this they are intending to build this on a flood plain.. Surely this is a crazy idea.. It surely cannot be allowed to compromise the flood risk situation most especially as potentially it will affect our properties.

And then there is the situation of compulsory purchase and closure of footpaths... I walk miles on the footpaths along with hundreds of other people. I don't see that a group of people wanting to pursue their hobby/passion should be allowed to squash the hobbies and passion of others just because they have financial backing. It may be their view that it will bring benefit to the local areas, but this believe is not that of the local people whose lives will be compromised. How is it that the land can be compulsorily purchased from someone who has no wish to sell for something that is not of national or significant importance? People should not be allowed to bully others into conceding their rights if they have no wish to.

I hope that the local council, voted in by the local people will listen to the local people and the property owners along the roadside and not ride roughshod over their thoughts, views and opinions just because they don't necessarily have the funding to stand and fight.

I await your response with interest

Yours faithfully

EMILY BENSTEAD