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Transport Infrastructure Planning Unit (TIPU)

Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

2nd December 2025

To whom it may concern,

Letter of Support – Network Rail Stalybridge to Diggle (Saddleworth) Enhancements Order

On behalf of Maritime Transport Ltd, I am writing to express our strong support for Network Rail's Transport and Works Act Order (TWAo) for the Transpennine Route Upgrade (TRU) between Stalybridge and Diggle (Saddleworth).

As one of the UK's leading intermodal logistics and rail freight terminal operators, Maritime Transport moves tens of thousands of containers every year between major deep-sea and short-sea ports to strategic rail freight interchanges, and key markets across the North of England. We rely on a resilient, capable rail network to serve our customers and support continued modal shift from road to rail.

The TRU programme represents a long overdue and transformational investment in one of the North's most important rail corridors. The enhancements proposed in this Order, including W12 gauge clearance, full electrification, modern digital signalling, higher line speeds, provision for longer trains, improved sidings, and additional capacity are essential to enabling the reliable movement of intermodal freight across the Pennines. These works directly support national decarbonisation goals and the Government's ambition for 75% growth in rail freight by 2050.

For many years, longstanding constraints between Stalybridge and Diggle have limited journey times, reduced freight path availability and restricted the ability of operators to offer east-west services.

The TRU programme now provides the clarity and commitment needed to unlock this route as a genuine strategic freight artery linking ports on the East Coast & Humber with key markets and logistics hubs in the North West and Yorkshire.



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We therefore strongly welcome the Order and in particular:

- **The focus on resolving freight capacity and capability constraints** on the Stalybridge–Diggle corridor, and the progress already demonstrated by TRU and Network Rail.
- **Commitment to electrification, higher line speeds, modern signalling, and improved layouts**, which will enable growth in both existing intermodal traffic and emerging markets.
- **Key interventions such as W12 gauge clearance and grade separation**, which will remove bottlenecks and allow the development of commercially viable, sustainable rail freight services.

As a private investor in inland rail freight terminals and rail-connected logistics capacity, Maritime Transport depends on confidence in long-term infrastructure planning. The enhancements proposed through this Order will directly support future investment decisions, enabling us to expand our rail freight offer, improve productivity, and deliver further carbon savings for our customers.

For these reasons, we urge timely approval of this TWAO. From our perspective, the TRU enhancements will act as a catalyst for regional economic growth, provide more reliable freight operations, and improve outcomes for the businesses, supply chains and communities we serve.

Please feel free to contact myself should you wish to discuss this letter or our freight operations in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

James Tierney
General Manager - Intermodal
Maritime Transport Ltd