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11 July 2006

Douglas Alexander
Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Mr Alexander

A57 / A628 Mottram Tintwistle Bypass – Peak District National Park

We are writing with reference to the A57 / A628 Mottram Tintwistle Bypass currently being progressed by the Highways Agency with a public inquiry announced recently by Stephen Ladyman for next year.

We are very concerned about the environmental impact of this scheme. We would also like to comment on the treatment of the scheme in the Regional Funding Allocations, and are very disappointed to see it was included in the recent North West Regional Funding Allocations list.

This scheme was treated as a 'commitment' in the North West region's advice on the Regional Funding Allocations as the Start of Works was unrealistically scheduled for 2007/8. This meant that the scheme was never assessed against other regional priorities, never had to justify itself, or go through the selection methodology despite being extremely controversial and environmentally unacceptable.

We note that the scheme was included in the "**Indicative list of schemes from 2009/10 to 2015/16**" in the 6 July 2006 announcements, and in the recent re-profiling of the scheme by the North West region, the scheme is now not scheduled to start until 2012-13.

We wrote to Alistair Darling on 3 April 2006 outlining our concerns, including the unrealistic start date for this scheme. Our concerns are now confirmed with the public

inquiry start date slipping a year, the start of works date slipping to 2013-14, and the significant opposition that is mounting up against the road.

This scheme is highly environmentally damaging, running through the Peak District National Park. It is opposed by the Peak District National Park Authority, the Countryside Agency, English Nature, Environment Agency, National Trust, several local authorities and over 1,400 local people who objected recently when the draft orders were published. The road is becoming increasingly unpopular locally, with many villagers favouring a lorry ban, rather than a massive road scheme.

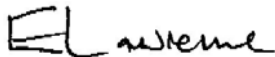
It is extremely regrettable that this scheme was never assessed against regional criteria, which included a 25% weighting to environmental considerations. It is only because the region accepted the Highways Agency's unrealistic programming for the scheme that it slipped through the RFA process untested.

Please reconsider this road scheme in the light of the above information. We invite you to withdraw the scheme from the Targeted Programme of Improvements and investigate sustainable alternatives, including a weight restriction so that heavy goods vehicles are restricted to the motorway network around the National Park, and do not blight the villages.

This would be popular, would fit with national policy, and would reconfirm the government's commitments to protect the environment.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Emma Lawrence
Save Swallows Wood

Rebecca Lush
Road Block

CC
Stephen Ladyman, Minister of State, DfT
Gillian Merron – Minister of State, DfT
David Milliband, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Barry Gardiner, Minister of State, Defra
Kathy Moore, Council for National Parks
Jonathan Porritt, Sustainable Development Commission
Archie Robertson, Highways Agency
Robert Devereux, DfT
Charlotte Dixon, DfT
GONW