Trade union and campaign coalition calls on the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to block the proposed ScotRail service cuts

“Coalition of unions and passenger, environmental, pensioner and campaign organisations call on the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to block the proposed ScotRail service cuts” *say the Rail, Maritime & Transport union press office, in a campaign statement from Scottish unions and campaign organisations we are republishing.*

“As the public consultation over Abellio ScotRail’s proposed timetable closes today, Friday 1st October, a coalition of unions and passenger, environmental, pensioner and campaign organisations have written to the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon to call on her to intervene and block the service cuts being proposed by Abellio ScotRail.

The proposed timetable, which would be implemented from May 2022, proposes reductions in rail services of around 300 a day, or 100,000 a year compared to the pre-pandemic timetable, a cut of around 12%.

The letter, which is signed by RMT, Aslef, STUC, TSSA, Unite the Union, Bring Back British Rail, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Get Glasgow Moving, Scottish Pensioners’ Forum and We Own It says:

“We believe the proposed service cuts will negatively affect rail passengers and be disastrous for Scotland’s railway.”

The letter goes on to say:

“With COP26 just weeks away, it is incomprehensible that ScotRail is proposing to slash services, despite rail being a sustainable and low-carbon form of transport. We believe that the cuts will push passengers away from the rail network and into cars – this will do nothing to achieve the Scottish Government’s climate change targets and its goal of reducing car km by 20% by 2030.”

The signatories are calling on the Scottish Government, which is already managing the ScotRail franchise under its Emergency Measures Agreement and will have taken ScotRail into public ownership before the new timetable is proposed to come into force to “…intervene as a matter of urgency and commit to protecting ScotRail services, jobs and ticket offices.”

And concludes:

“With just months to go until ScotRail is taken into public ownership, the Scottish Government has the opportunity to create a sustainable, reliable, accessible and regular rail network for Scotland, and we urge you to take this opportunity rather than allowing short-sighted and damaging cuts to go ahead.”

Reproduced from the RMT website https://www.rmt.org.uk/news/coalition-of-unions-and-passenger-environmental-pensioner-and/

The full letter reads:

> *“Dear First Minister,*
>
> *ScotRail Timetable Consultation*
>
> *We are writing to you to raise serious concerns about the proposals to significantly cut ScotRail services and to call on you to block these damaging cuts.*

As you will be aware, Abellio ScotRail has been holding a consultation, which closes today, over a proposed timetable for May 2022 onwards, which would mean a reduction of approximately 300 services a day, or around 100,000 services a year. A cut of around 12% compared to the pre-pandemic timetable.

We believe the proposed service cuts will negatively affect rail passengers and be disastrous for Scotland's railway.
With COP26 just weeks away, it is incomprehensible that ScotRail is proposing to slash services, despite rail being a sustainable and low-carbon form of transport. We believe that the cuts will push passengers away from the rail network and into cars – this will do nothing to achieve the Scottish Government's climate change targets and its goal of reducing car km by 20% by 2030.

ScotRail's consultation comes off the back of the 'Docherty report' which advocated service cuts, job losses and ticket office closures across Scotland's railway. On the one hand, the Scottish Government has sought to distance itself from this report, yet at the same time it is presiding over the proposed service cuts. It is also absurd that Abellio is consulting on a timetable for May 2022 when it will no longer be the ScotRail operator.

We also believe that the service cuts may be used to try and justify job cuts and ticket office closures across Scotland's railway in the future. We oppose any such cuts which would undoubtedly worsen passenger safety, security and accessibility.

The Scottish Government is managing the Abellio ScotRail franchise and it cannot wash its hands over this issue any longer. It is clear that the Scottish Government has the ability to block these damaging proposals and we are calling on you to intervene as a matter of urgency and commit to protecting ScotRail services, jobs and ticket offices. With

just months to go until ScotRail is taken into public ownership, the Scottish Government has the opportunity to create a sustainable, reliable, accessible and regular rail network for Scotland, and we urge you to take this opportunity rather than allowing short-sighted and damaging cuts to go ahead.

Yours Sincerely,

Mick Lynch – RMT, General Secretary
Kevin Lindsay – Aslef, Scotland District Organiser
Roz Foyer – STUC, General Secretary
Gary Kelly – TSSA, Organiser – Scotland
Pat McIlvogue – Unite the Union, Lead Industrial Officer – ScotRail
Ellie Harrison – Bring Back British Rail
Gavin Thompson – Friends of the Earth Scotland, Transport Campaigner
Susan Galloway – Get Glasgow Moving
Rose Jackson – Scottish Pensioners Forum, Chairperson
Cat Hobbs – We Own It, Director”