

Railway industry leaders send open letter to the PM, urging GBR Rail Reform legislation not to be delayed beyond the current Parliament

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Over 60 rail business leaders have written to the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, urging him not to delay in bringing forward legislation to enact the Government's rail reform plans in the coming Parliamentary year. Legislation is needed to create Great British Railways (GBR), which will bring track and train operations together within one body.

The proposed legislation has been delayed since the Government published its reform proposals in 2021; however, rail business leaders are concerned that failure to legislate within the next Parliamentary session means the railway will have no clear direction. This uncertainty about the future structure of the industry threatens a hiatus in key decisions being made, jeopardising progress with essential rail works, jobs, investment and business growth, and ultimately undermining services for passengers and freight customers.

RIA Chief Executive Darren Caplan said: "The Railway Industry Association and its rail supply members are simply asking Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to ensure the Government gets on with the process of expediting

its own legislation.

“Getting on with rail reform will help provide the certainty rail businesses need to invest, take on staff and develop their business plans, ultimately benefiting passenger and freight customers, and resulting in better value-for-money for taxpayers.

“However, failure to enact the GBR legislation means a delay to reform of at least 18 months, and possibly longer as we await the next General Election and then fresh Bills come forward in its aftermath. There would be a heightened risk of hiatus in rail investment if decisions get delayed as rail reform stalls.

“Some of the biggest names in the rail supply sector have signed this letter to the Prime Minister, to urge him to ensure the required legislation is passed. We ask Rishi Sunak to take note of the letter, if he wants to have a world-class rail system in the UK, which connects the country and delivers on his own agendas to level-up, decarbonise, and encourage industries which can give a major boost to economic growth.”

Photo credit: Railway Industry Association