

PRESS RELEASE



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Treat ports and rail as one, GB Railfreight urges inquiry

GB Railfreight (GBRf) welcomes the Transport Select Committee's inquiry into [Access to Ports](#) as an opportunity to open the rail freight market to further competition.

Award winning freight operator GBRf is one of the UK rail industry's most dynamic companies with a workforce numbering some 450 and operating 650 trains per week.

In its response to the Select Committee's Inquiry GBRf propounds the view that there is an urgent need for an aligned growth strategy and investment plan treating ports and rail as one combined system of transport rather than separate entities.

The company, which operates from a total of eleven UK ports, argues that in order to fulfil its role in growing the UK economy, the rail freight industry requires full, intelligently co-ordinated access to ports. It is, however, currently hampered by a lack of any joined-up approach to government investment policy on ports.

The rail freight industry, GBRf argues, is a vital component in driving forward the UK economy as a whole, acting as a gateway for a variety of commodities essential to economic growth. To support that role, the company contends, the industry must have a regulatory regime that promotes competition and ensures there are no barriers to port access.

John Smith, GB Railfreight's managing director, said: "*Ports are the life source of our business. It is crucial they are readily accessible to bulk and multi-modal rail freight to allow them to work at maximum efficiency and be utilised to their full potential. Suitable investment therefore needs to be clustered around this source.*"

"*Rail freight*", he said, "*is one of the most effective ways to transport goods across the country and, as such, is vital to the smooth running of Britain's economy*".

"*Freight should not be seen as a standalone issue but as a vital element in the wider economic debate,*" Smith added. "*In order to keep the economy moving, it is essential that UK policy-makers at all levels create suitable conditions for rail freight operators to access UK ports and for investors to make long-term decisions to support growth and jobs.*"