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Thank you for your joint letter of 18 July 2016 about HS2.

As you have noted, the HS2 project has only recently been comprehensively reviewed by the National Audit Office who scrutinise public spending for Parliament and hold government to account. The NAO's report confirmed that the strategic case for HS2 has been made, the project is making good progress, and that we are on course to gain the powers needed to start building the railway by the end of this year.

The NAO report also recognised the significant cost savings that HS2 have identified. The Department and HS2 Ltd are now looking at how these can be delivered without significant changes to the scope or benefits of the project to ensure we remain within budget.

You also mention the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) recent review of HS2, which reported delivery confidence for HS2 as amber/red. However, as the IPA have recognised, it is to be expected that a project of the scale, complexity and integration challenges of HS2 will have a lower delivery confidence throughout its early stages.

Over the last year MPs voted 399 to 42 in favour of the hybrid Bill for Phase One, which is expected to receive Royal Assent by the end of this year, and the project continues to meet all its major milestones and remains on track to have spades in the ground in 2017.

Against this background and the fact that HS2 has a complete and wide-ranging suite of external assurance planned over the coming year, I will not be requesting any further assessments of the project at this stage.

Will be under



Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT