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Government Discrimination against Innovative Light Rail in favour of Urban Diesel Buses

I am writing to enquire whether it may be possible to make a formal complaint to the Office of Fair Trading concerning the apparent discrimination by Government against innovative low-cost light rail, in favour of urban diesel buses.

The attached Memorandum summarises the main points of contention which have been raised with the DfT repeatedly over the last 8 years. No explanation has ever been provided by the DfT as to why these apparent instances of discrimination continue. The Minister has consistently refused over the years to discuss them with the promoters of innovative light rail. The result has been that official support and encouragement for urban diesel buses, combined with huge Government subsidies for buses, have effectively prevented small companies promoting innovative light rail (such as this company) from entering the public transport market over the last 8 years, since the first demonstration of Ultra Light Rail in public service in Bristol took place in 1998-2000.

In addition, official support and Government subsidies given to urban diesel buses have swelled the profits of the increasingly powerful, locally monopolistic bus companies, such as Stagecoach, Firstbus, Go-ahead, Arriva, National Express etc. This has further reinforced the strength of the vested interests preventing the introduction of alternative transport modes which bring greater benefit to the public and meet Government Transport Policy principles.

I attach a copy of my last letter to the Minister for Transport on this subject dated October 22nd 2005. I have received no response to this letter from either the Minister or any of his officials. This typifies the apparent indifference with which the Department treats these matters. Please let me know if you require further information which is not available on our web-site at www.ultralightrail.com

Yours sincerely

James Skinner
Chairman