Thank you for inviting the Road Haulage Association to submit views on Freight Transport Infrastructure and Capital Investments. We will confine our response mainly to road freight matters at this stage but would be glad to contribute comments on other freight transport modes if you ask us to do so.

The Road Haulage Association is a substantial trade association representing road haulage and logistics companies throughout the United Kingdom. Our members range from small hauliers with one lorry to the largest road freight logistics operators with hundreds of vehicles. We also have interest in multi-modal operations, in particular, sea and rail transport. In addition to our representational role we provide advisory and operational services including training, educational, legal, and compliance auditing. The Road Haulage Association has an office in Edinburgh with staff serving members in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

**Policy challenges:** In terms of challenges, we wish to mention firstly an item not related to infrastructure but on a policy issue regarding efficiency of road freight movements within Scotland. The matter relates to speed limits for lorries which are being increased throughout England and Wales but in Scotland will only apply to sections of the A9 trunk road on a trial basis. In summary it will mean that Scotland will be at a disadvantage in terms of freight delivery times and efficiencies compared to point to point journey distances undertaken within England and Wales.

**Road Infrastructure:** Turning to Road Infrastructure developments, we look forward to the benefits of dual carriageway completion on the A9 between Perth and Inverness both in terms of road safety and transport efficiency. At the time of writing the weather is taking its toll on traffic movements on this route. We have suggested that some sort of permanent facilities to allow safe parking of vehicles drivers and passengers ‘off the A9 road’ be considered to help cope with emergency situations caused by weather or other events in the remote areas. Such parking facilities would also help our drivers to park and take rest and break requirements in compliance with legislation. Another road we are looking forward to completion of improvements is the A82 which is an important route in terms of both local, holiday and freight traffic movements in the West of Scotland. We do however still have concerns about the robustness of the A83 trunk road which continues to suffer from landslips and other difficulties relating to safe passage for large vehicles.

We would also like to say that other main routes in our opinion need to be upgraded whenever possible to meet current and future traffic demands including for example: The A1 route on the Scottish East Coast needs to be fully upgraded to dual carriageway standards. This road is a main route to the ports in England and is therefore very important in terms of export traffic. We understand that the section of the road between Newcastle and Morpeth in England will be upgraded but there are no plans to continue this modernisation to the rest of the singled Scottish section. There is also concern that the routes to and from the Cairnryan port especially the A77 and A75 (an official ‘Euro Route’) which link Ireland and Scotland are
inadequate and outdated to cope with current traffic and freight volumes. Also, a mention of the A96 between Inverness and Aberdeen has to be made in terms of the need for upgrading to meet current and future transport requirements. Our last comment on roads relates to the condition of the existing road infrastructure. The condition of motorway, trunk and other roads continue to deteriorate at what seems to be an alarming rate affecting route safety and reliability.

**Freight Grant Schemes Rail and Waterway:** Road Freight operators are keen to utilise other modes of transport when it makes sense to do so in terms of efficiency and the environment. Most of the large road freight logistics companies now utilise the railway network from ‘terminal to terminal’ whenever practicable to transport goods destined for the domestic and export markets. In Scotland inland waterway is rarely used as an alternative transport mode. It would seem therefore that road/rail facilities should receive the greater share of any grant aid.

**The Environment and Emissions Reduction:** The road freight sector has invested significant amounts of money to specify and utilise lorries that meet European emission levels. Today’s latest commercial vehicles therefore have state of the art engineering applied to reduce pollution levels. The sector is also considering and experimenting with alternative fuels and other low emission vehicle options including hybrid versions. The Road Haulage Association in Scotland meets regularly with the SEPA/STEP body, the Scottish Urban Air Quality Group, and some City Councils to discuss environmental matters. We also back the ‘Ecostars’ programme which encourages vehicle operators to reduce fuel consumption. The Association also offers Economic Driver Training courses to encourage fuel savings and consequent reductions in pollution. Also mentioned previously in this document our sector will use the rail mode if suitable. The same applies to the use of ferries such as on the Rosyth to Zeebrugge route. This reduces the number of long distance journeys by road thus lowering lorry exhaust emission output.

Finally, the Committee Members may wish to read the contents of our recent submission to Lord Smith on Scottish Devolution matters. We would also like to offer our help and support for any follow up discussion resulting from this matter and would welcome any future dialogue with the Committee.

16th January 2015 V1.