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## Petition aims to stop rail line being privatised

Friday 18 October 2013

**CAMPAIGNERS and rail union chiefs are petitioning to keep a key rail line in public hands.**

More than 23,000 passengers have signed the petition to stop the East Coast line between Scotland and London being re-privatised, which is being handed to shadow rail minister Lillian Greenwood and Green Party MP Caroline Lucas today.

The line has been in the public sector since 2009 but is due to go back into private ownership in early 2015.

More than 60 MPs from Labour, the Liberal Democrats, Green and Scottish National (SNP) parties have signed an early day motion calling on the Government not to re-privatise the line

The campaign is supported by RMT union general secretary Bob Crow and TSSA union general secretary Manuel Cortes. They argue a publicly run East Coast is better value for money than a line operated in the private sector.

Campaigners highlighted figures out last week, that show East Coast paid £208 million in premium and dividend payments to the Treasury in 2012/13. Its turnover rose 4.2% and it carried more than 19 million passengers, up 1% on the previous year.

They also point out that figures from the Office of Rail Regulation show East Coast received the lowest public subsidy of any rail operator by a big margin.

Ms Greenwood said: "East Coast has gone from strength to strength. Passenger satisfaction is at record levels, all profits have been reinvested and £600m returned to the taxpayer.

"It makes no sense to waste public money and government time on selling off East Coast."

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