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Bill.Aitken.msp@scottish.parliament.uk
Sent: 14 February 2007 17:13
To: Anne Jolly
Subject: Competition Commission - Scottish Citylink/Megabus - Submission
Importance: High

14 February 2007

Anne Jolly
Inquiry Secretary (Scottish Citylink) Competitions Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4AD

Dear Ms Jolly

SCOTTISH CITYLINK INQUIRY - NOTICE OF PROPOSAL TO ACCEPT UNDERTAKINGS

I refer to the above and to your current consultation on undertakings.

As a Member of the Scottish Parliament for Glasgow Region, I have a specific interest in transport matters, both in terms of the delivery of Scottish Executive policies on behalf of my constituents.

At present the regional transport partnerships all over Scotland are consulting on their individual strategies for transport and much emphasis has been placed on the importance of the role of the bus within the public transport industry. Additionally, the Scottish Executive has recently published a National Transport Strategy, and part of that is a Buses Action Plan. Both the Scottish Executive and the Regional Partnerships are aiming to increase the share of travel by sustainable modes, including bus and coach, and the increased use of bus and coach services is key to continuing to develop economic prosperity and tourism across Scotland.

I am of the opinion that a 40% increase in passengers travelling on Citylink's Saltire Cross services is a significant achievement. Furthermore, this is enhanced by my belief that a substantial percentage of these journeys were previously undertaken in the car or not at all if the low fares structure had not been in place. These fares have provided those on a lower income scale to be afforded opportunities to travel thus helping to minimise social exclusion.

It is clear in your Final Report that one solution to any perceived problem would have

been to adopt undertakings, restricting what changes Scottish Citylink could make to fares or service levels. In my opinion, this would have been the right outcome, as it would have provided protection to customers whilst allowing them to continue to benefit from a coherent, consistent and frequent timetable.

In conclusion, I urge the Competition Commission to reconsider its decision, and require Scottish Citylink to submit undertakings on fares and service levels. I have noted from various other insertions on your website that there is significant cross party support for you allowing Scottish Citylink to remain intact, and I urge you to use the information and comments contained in these submission as justification to alter your decision.

Finally, please add this to the responses published on your website.

Yours sincerely

Bill Aitken