

TramForward

Campaigning for Light Rail

PRESS RELEASE FROM *TramForward*

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LRTA welcomes Defra-DfT consultation

The Light Rail Transit Association (LRTA) welcomes the news that the Government has at last acknowledged the importance of brake, tyre and road surface wear as a major factor in traffic pollution (Defra/DfT-Call for evidence: brake, tyre and road surface wear, 26 July).

The LRTA and the All Party Parliamentary Group on Light Rail (APPLRG) have been drawing attention to this phenomenon for a number of years; known as the “Oslo effect” after the first major study in the eighties.

Particulates from this pollution source tend to be smaller than those from exhaust emissions (PM_{2.5} as opposed to PM₁₀) and can not only enter the bloodstream but can penetrate the cerebral membrane and enter the brain. They have been identified as a possible factor in the development of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

This pollution is caused by all rubber-tyred vehicles, whether internal combustion or electric; indeed, electric vehicles, being heavier than their internal combustion counterparts, will generate even greater amounts.

The LRTA and the APPLRG are campaigning for more tramways (steel wheels on steel rails) on the most polluted urban transit corridors, where they can replace the most densely operated bus routes as well as encouraging a switch from cars.

Jim Harkins, Secretariat of the APPLRG, said “it is encouraging to see that, after all our years of lobbying, the Government is at last taking steps to address this major problem of traffic pollution.”

Paul Rowen, Chair of the LRTA and a former MP, said: “There’s a growing health problem with these particulates that will put an increasing strain on our NHS. Ministers need to recognise this and adopt policies that favour pollution free transport modes like Light Rail.”

NOTES

1. **TramForward** is the campaigning arm of the Light Rail Transit Association (LRTA).
2. The LRTA (<http://www.lrta.org/>) is the world's leading organisation campaigning for better public transport in urban areas through light rail, tramway and metro systems and has been in existence for more than 80 years. It also supports the revitalisation of suburban and rural transport through the application of light rail and TramTrain technology.
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