



**Caroline Russell AM**  
**City Hall**  
**The Queen's Walk**  
**LONDON SE1 2AA**

Sadiq Khan  
Mayor of London  
City Hall  
The Queen's Walk  
London SE1 2AA

23 October 2019

Dear Sadiq,

### **Silvertown Road Tunnel contract**

I am writing to express my concern about the latest information I have been given by Transport for London (TfL) on the legal challenge to the award of the contract for the Silvertown Road Tunnel. I am informed that: "Silver Thames Connect (STC) has consented to TfL's application to Court to lift the automatic suspension on award of the Silvertown Tunnel contract, and we [TfL] will now progress the arrangements for award of the contract to the Riverlinx consortium as soon as possible."

Today you have released figures showing the scale of PM<sub>2.5</sub> particle pollution across London. This morning, Breathe London is showing the worst PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution hotspot in London is on Hendon Street in North Greenwich next to two schools and within sight of the Blackwall Tunnel approach. Building a new urban motorway tunnel at Silvertown will simply induce more polluting traffic to pass through south east London and commit Londoners to years of continued heavy traffic to pay off the construction debt.

We are now nearing a year since your declaration of a climate emergency. In correspondence with campaigners about the Silvertown Road Tunnel, your Deputy Mayor for Transport has said that the 1.5C trajectory: "takes into account planned developments such as the Silvertown Tunnel," and that it has been: "independently assessed by C40 [C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group] to be in line with the advice of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the level of carbon emission reduction required to put us on track to stay within 1.5C global-warming." It is astonishing that you are citing IPCC and C40 to justify building this high-carbon, traffic-inducing pollution source.



City Hall Green — Caroline Russell AM

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It is key that any future crossings of the Thames incorporate the modes prioritised in your transport strategy – public transport, walking and cycling – as the first priority. A few buses, and one bus that may carry cycles through the proposed Silvertown Road Tunnel are simply not enough in the face of the climate emergency. Councils throughout London are calling on you to act to provide new crossings of the Thames for walking and cycling – at Rotherhithe, at North Greenwich and in Battersea. The borrowing to fund Silvertown should be used to build a comprehensive package of cycling and walking connections across the Thames paid for with the revenue from a smart, fair road pricing scheme.

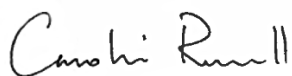
The Assembly's recent report into the Garden Bridge has shown how decisions made in the final months of a Mayor's term can lead to problems and questions years later. A rush to complete the contract stage on the Garden Bridge has led to millions of pounds of public money being lost, with nothing to show for it. Decisions on infrastructure, including on the Silvertown Road Tunnel, need to be taken calmly and only with support from politicians across London.

Earlier this month, Greenwich councillors took the time to pause and reconsider their original support for the Silvertown Road Tunnel. After discussions with your Deputy Mayor for Transport, they wrote to you to ask that you pause work on the Silvertown Road Tunnel. I hope you will listen to the Greenwich councillors and consider their concerns, along with those of Newham, Lewisham and Hackney councils.

The legal test set up by Client Earth's High Court actions on air pollution says that you must: 1) aim for compliance as soon as possible, 2) act to reduce human exposure and 3) ensure that compliance is likely, not just possible.<sup>1</sup> I do not believe that committing to the construction of the Silvertown Road Tunnel passes these tests.

This toxic tunnel belongs in a TfL archive, along with all the plans for motorways that would have carved up London in the 1980s. By pressing ahead and signing any Silvertown Road Tunnel contract, as I am informed you plan to do, you would be locking in Londoners, and future Mayors to years of heavy traffic, and you would be concreting in further damage to health and continued climate changing emissions. I urge you to rethink your plans and scrap this project.

Yours sincerely,



**Caroline Russell**  
**Green Party Member of the London Assembly**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.documents.clientearth.org/wp-content/uploads/library/2019-03-15-what-do-clientearths-legal-cases-mean-for-local-authority-plans-to-deliver-nitrogen-dioxide-compliance-in-england-and-wales-ce-en.pdf>

