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GB Railfreight boosts rail services business with Serco Caledonian Sleeper contract

GB Railfreight (Eurotunnel Group) today announced that it has signed a 15-year contract with Serco to provide train drivers and traction for its **Caledonian Sleeper** franchise. This contract will provide GBRf around £100 million in revenues over 15 years.

Due to commence on the 1st April 2015, GBRf will be providing train drivers and traction for six night services southbound and six night haulage services northbound per week, from Sunday to Friday. These services will be operating on both the Lowland Sleeper route, between Euston and Edinburgh and Glasgow, and the Highland Sleeper route between Euston and Fort William, Aberdeen and Inverness.

From the beginning of the contract, four refurbished class 92s purchased thanks to Groupe Eurotunnel will be used on the electrified routes south of Edinburgh and Glasgow. North of Edinburgh, the company is planning to utilise six class 73/9s from October 2015, which are currently undergoing work at Wabtec's facility in Loughborough. In the meantime, it will be operating class 47s, on hire from Harry Needle Railroad Company (HNRC).

This contract is a significant development for GBRf, highlighting its intentions for growth in the rail services market. With heavy investments in both traction and driver training, it's another example of the freight operator's approach to offering bespoke services that target the specific customer's needs.

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, said: *"GB Railfreight are delighted to announce that we will be supporting Serco with train drivers and traction on their Caledonian Sleeper franchise. We've been working closely with the company in putting together a strategy that would work best for them on these given routes, and have invested in the appropriate rolling stock and training to make this strategy effective. We hope to build on this relationship over the next 15 years and ensure that passengers receive the optimum service."*

Serco's Managing Director for the Caledonian Sleeper, Peter Strachan said, *"GBRf are one of our key partners on the Caledonian Sleeper franchise. Together, we have worked closely to develop a traction strategy for the lifetime of the franchise which takes the service from the 1st April through to the introduction of the new trains in 2018 and beyond. GBRf have extensive experience in the rail services market and we looking forward to working together."*