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PRESS RELEASE

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CALL FOR AXED ROAD CASH TO UPGRADE RAILWAY

Rail campaigners are calling for £33m of regional funding which had been earmarked for a rejected road scheme to be used to restore double track on the main railway line between Kemble and Swindon.

The controversial Westbury bypass was turned down in July by Communities Secretary John Denham. Now Railfuture Severnside is suggesting that the money be spent elsewhere in Wiltshire to relieve a major bottleneck in the Region's rail network.

"Now that the Government has decided to electrify the main lines from Paddington to Bristol and South Wales, the Kemble route will carry a large number of diverted trains while the work is carried out. This makes it essential that the 12 mile single track section is doubled as soon as possible," said Branch Secretary Nigel Bray.

He added that the line via Kemble is the only realistic alternative route for trains between South Wales and South East England whenever the Severn Tunnel or the routes leading to it are closed for engineering work or by any other obstruction. The Kemble line is also the main rail artery between Gloucestershire and London.

Notes for editors:

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Railfuture is Britain's only completely independent voice on railway development. We are not affiliated to or sponsored by any political party, trade union, or private industry. We are funded almost entirely by our members.

Rail is a vital part of an integrated efficient transport system serving a modern, vibrant, environmentally sustainable economy. We are pro-rail but not anti-road. Railfuture maintains that investment in rail travel and rail freight is vital to the future of the UK economy and environment.

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