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PRESS RELEASE

1 July 2009

RAILFUTURE CALLS FOR STABILITY AND IMPROVEMENTS AFTER NATIONAL EXPRESS EAST COAST COLLAPSE

Rail campaign group Railfuture has issued its response to the collapse of the National Express East Coast franchise.

The National Express statement of intent to withdraw from the East Coast franchise comes as little surprise to anyone. All that, however, is now in the past. A new franchise is to be let and Railfuture welcomes the concern expressed by the Secretary of State to use the opportunity to "secure better passenger services and facilities".

We hope that the opportunity will be taken to reinstate some of the restaurant services which were withdrawn and to reverse the car parking price increases and other penny pinching measures.

It is important that passengers are not deterred from using the service by confusion over its future, and we welcome the government's commitment to keep the service running as usual.

This episode has shown up some of the deficiencies in the franchising system, in particular the impossibility of accurately forecasting future passenger demand. There are lessons to be learned and we look forward to contributing to the full consultation which Lord Adonis has promised on the franchise specification

Notes for editors:

Railfuture is the campaigning name of the Railway Development Society Ltd (a not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634. Reg. Office: 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND

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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