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PRESS RELEASE

21 September 2009

RAIL GROUP CALLS FOR ROLLING ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAMME

The rail pressure group Railfuture has written to Lord Adonis urging him to continue electrification beyond the recently announced Great Western Main line. Passengers in the East Midlands in particular may have to wait for improvements to their rail service, as the government has not yet committed to electrifying the Midland Main line.

"We welcome the Government's decision to electrify a substantial portion of the UK's railway system" says the group "However we hope that this really is just the first stage of a rolling electrification programme." Commenting on the Midland Main line electrification, they continue "We are disappointed that a decision has not been made now... rather than only being considered later"

The full text of the letter is as follows:

"We welcome the Government's decision to electrify a substantial portion of the UK's railway system, to include the Great Western Main Line to Bristol, Cardiff, Oxford and Newbury, and also the remaining unelectrified sections of the Liverpool-Manchester line via Newton-le-Willows. However we hope that this really is just the first stage of a rolling electrification programme to encompass the other routes shown in your plans, and indeed well beyond. We also welcome the recognition that a large fleet of diesel-engined IEP trains will not now be required, a project which I am sure you will recognise was strongly and widely criticised throughout the railway industry.

We are disappointed that a decision has not been made now that Bedford-Nottingham/Derby-Sheffield will definitely be included in the plan, rather than only being considered later, and why the cost/ratio of benefits to the community (not just the railway network in isolation) are not fully recognised now. The Leeds-Manchester route is also a high priority candidate for inclusion, although we recognise that this route's services originate from a wide range of cities across the north-west and north-east, and these routes ideally would need to be electrified too if the economic benefits of electrifying the core route are to be

achieved.

We take this opportunity to send your Department a further copy of Railfuture's own Electrification paper, sent to you in February 2009, which is more ambitious than the Government's present plans, but was nevertheless carefully structured to limit our proposals to only those routes perceived as most capable of delivering the maximum "network" benefits, efficient use of rolling stock including locomotives, and deriving the maximum commercial and environmental benefits possible. We would welcome your detailed comments on the proposals in the light of your own immediate plans."

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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