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NEWS RELEASE – IMMEDIATE 26th JULY 2017

Scrapping of electrification of Lakes Line deplorable.

TravelWatch NorthWest (TWNW), the independent Community Interest Company representing users of all forms of public transport in NW England, deplores the recent decision by the Government to scrap the long standing scheme to electrify the line between Windermere and Oxenholme.

Over 2 years ago, a ceremony in Windermere, led by Baroness Kramer, celebrated the announcement that the line would be electrified early as part of the scheme to bring new electric train services to the North of England. Businesses and rail passenger groups in the Lake District, recently designated a World Heritage Site, are understandably angry at this spectacular U-turn, particularly as additional investment in Cross Rail 2 in London was announced at virtually the same time. It appears that the government's attitude to favour the South over the North still exists in earnest.

Chris Dale, Chairman of TWNW said, "Whilst the government is promising bi-mode (diesel & electric) trains instead of full electric trains, their performance will be inferior and slower as diesel engines add weight that has to be carried around all the time. Moreover operating and maintenance costs of bi-mode are likely to be higher than electric trains over their life. As the Lake District's recently acquired World Heritage status is expected to bring extra tourism travel into the area, bi-mode is not the answer."

Other lines in the country are being similarly affected and we have specific concerns about the North TransPennine route linking the growing conurbations of Manchester and Leeds which is overdue for electrification.

Mr. Dale added, "These issues are a major concern to all authorities in the North as they represent a major curtailment of rail infrastructure investment as well as conveniently ignoring environmental considerations by continuing with diesel emissions, flying in the face of current policies. The North of England is fed up with broken promises."

ENDS

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