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GB Railfreight calls for “intelligent electrification” at Transport Select Committee inquiry hearing

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, yesterday called for “intelligent electrification” at the Transport Select Committee’s future of rail freight oral evidence session.

Whilst recognising that parts of the electric spine are good for rail freight, John Smith called for the prioritisation of certain corridors – such as Birmingham-Nuneaton – in order to encourage the industry to invest in electric locomotives.

The freight-focused evidence session was part of the select committee’s wider inquiry into “Investing in the Railway”, which seeks to scrutinise the impact and deliverability of Network Rail’s current and future investment plans.

At the evidence session, GB Railfreight also called for:-

- The Government to reserve capacity for rail freight.
- The industry to continue to work together with Network Rail to drive efficiencies.
- An integrated transport strategy with a long-term vision, rather than piecemeal investments.
- The Government to consider MSRS grants as a tool that could encourage the growth of rail freight.

GB Railfreight was invited to give oral evidence, having submitted written evidence to the committee.

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, said: *“At the moment, the majority of electrification schemes in the UK support the passenger network.*

“With freight, there are certain markets that suit electric haulage, such as intermodal, but there is a need to prioritise electrifying the routes that serve them.

“Prioritising the electrification of specific strategic corridors, such as Birmingham to Nuneaton, will help incentivise the industry to invest in electric locomotives.

“Intelligent electrification is important if the Government is to encourage the modal freight shift from road to rail.”