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## **INVERNET RAIL PROJECT GETS S.E. GO AHEAD.**

Transport Minister Nicol Stephen today awarded £553,000 to The Highland Council to allow the Invernet Rail Project to go ahead.

The project will provide a three year pilot rail commuter service from Kingussie and Aviemore to Inverness and from Tain to Inverness beginning January, 2005.

Mary McLauchlan, The Highland Council's Director of Transport, Environmental and Community Services said: "The Highland Council is delighted with the announcement made by the Transport Minister Nicol Stephen today for the investment, further development and support of the Invernet Project. This will make a very significant difference to the transport infrastructure of the project and it will allow us to greatly improve the Highland rail network."

Highland Council's Transport spokesman, Councillor Ewen Mackinnon said: "This will make a significant difference to the transport choices available to the people in Badenoch and Strathspey and the Inner Moray Firth Area. The existing Invernet Project has proved to be successful and this increased frequency and extension of service will further positively enhance the project. This will be a further development to an already very successful project bringing clear benefits to the area."

**-ends-**