**Press Release**

17th June 2020 – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DfT TO FUND A SURPRISING SOLUTION TO LEAVES ON THE LINE

CoCatalyst Limited based in Farnborough, Hampshire has been awarded First of a Kind 2020 funding from the Department for Transport, delivered by InnovateUK. The funding will enable CoCatalyst to demonstrate a new way to improve railway operations especially during Autumn.

The team at CoCatalyst have come up with Water-Trak, an elegantly simple solution that could start to put an end to leaves on the line misery as soon as next year, if things go to plan.

The CoCatalyst solution?

Simply add water.

Of course, there’s more to it than that. But the basic idea is to create rainy-day conditions which are known to prevent the problems associated with leaves on the line.

Traditionally, the rail industry has dealt with the problem by using special trains which jet the rails with millions of litres of water, Autumn timetables and line-side tree felling. If all else fails, the trains rely on the steam age technology of sand to stop and start safely. Even if a minor problem occurs on a small part of the network, it can easily escalate into significant operational chaos. It’s a problem that costs the industry more than £300m per year [1].

The beauty of the Water-Trak solution is that it doesn’t require high-pressure jet cleaning of the rail. It applies less than one teaspoonful of water for every metre in front of the leading train wheels.

The CoCatalyst team fitted Water-Trak to a test train and found it could significantly improve braking and acceleration on leaves. They discovered that Water-Trak also provides a cleaning effect - i.e. adding water to the track reduces the chance of later trains having braking problems. If multiple passenger trains were equipped with the Water-Trak system, then the need for diesel-powered water-jetting trains and other unpopular Autumn measures would be reduced and possibly eliminated.

The DfT funded First of a Kind 2020 project will focus on demonstrating that a passenger train-mounted Water-Trak solution can optimise railway operations by reducing the impact of leaves on the line. Working with project partners Porterbrook and Northern Rail, CoCatalyst plan to carry out live track-testing this Autumn. That means that this exciting new solution to leaves on the line may start to be rolled out as soon as Autumn 2021.

For more information please visit the Water-Trak website ([www.water-trak.com](http://www.water-trak.com)) or contact CoCatalyst at: [info@cocatalyst.com](mailto:info@cocatalyst.com)

CoCatalyst is a specialist engineering solutions company that operates in a range of different industry sectors including energy, automotive, aerospace and food. CoCatalyst has been working closely with the rail industry since 2013.

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References:

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/22/end-line-leaves-experts-find-way-reduce-autumn-stopping-distances/>