

Firm wants to pave Britain with old tires

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A British company says that laying down roadways made of rubber on abandoned rail lines could be the solution to traffic congestion.

Holdfast Rubber Highway converts shredded tires into interlocking rubber panels that can be laid down as road surface. Peter Coates Smith, the managing director, told the BBC that the process is environmentally friendly since the panels are made by a cold process with few emissions.

Alternative uses for old tires are also desirable since European Union regulations take effect in July that ban burning them or putting them in landfills.

But critics say that adding roads will not relieve highway congestion. Gill Harrison of Sustrans said abandoned rail lines should become biking trails and walking routes.

Another skeptic, Roger Ford of Modern Railways magazine, said that rails and ties have already been pulled up from many disused lines and they have been overgrown by shrubbery, which would make the conversion more expensive.

But Coates Smith said the company is eyeing rail lines in built-up areas not those in the countryside.

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