HS2 rail plans were rushed, opponents tell Supreme Court

Ministers are accused of neglecting to conduct a proper environmental assessment of the proposed railway   Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

Ministers cut corners in their haste to push through the planned High Speed Two railway, neglecting to conduct a proper environmental assessment and leaving the plans in breach of EU law, the Supreme Court heard yesterday.

Opponents of the £50 billion project urged a panel of seven justices to quash the Government's decision to proceed with the railway. David Elvin, QC, told the court that the Government should halt its infrastructure project to allow for a full investigation of the environmental impact of the planned railway and other possible alternatives. The process would take more than a year, Mr Elvin said.

Such a delay would create considerable uncertainty over the project in the run-up to the 2015 election.

Ten councils opposed to HS2 are also fighting the case, brought by the HS2 Action Alliance protest group, which comes after the Court of Appeal rejected a claim against the planned railway.

Ministers insist that the case for building Europe's fastest railway is watertight. The Supreme Court justices are expected to defer their judgment for between eight and 12 weeks.

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