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2 February 2015

Dear Clerks

Thank you for your letter of 13 January regarding consideration of Petition PE 1098 and the Public Petitions Committee's (PPC) request for a progress update with particular regard to the devolution of powers relating to seatbelt provision on dedicated school transport.

The Committee will be aware, from correspondence submitted by Keith Brown MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure, Investment and Cities, that the necessary administrative and legal process to agree the Order has been taking place between Transport Scotland, the Department for Transport, the Office of the Advocate General and the Scotland Office over recent months. I note and sympathise with the Committee's frustration regarding the timescales involved, yet should point out that this is the established formal process for the progress of such matters between Westminster and Holyrood.

Following agreement of the Order by the respective parties, I was able to write to Claire Perry MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, and David Mundell MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Scotland, on 8 January to confirm their final agreement to the Order being made under Section 30(2) of the Scotland Act 1998. I am pleased to now update the PPC that both UK Government ministers agreed to this. Subsequently, the Order was laid at the UK Parliament and the Scottish Parliament on 29 January and will now undergo scrutiny at both parliaments.

In addition to the legislative progress, PPC members may wish to be aware that the Seatbelts on School Transport Working Group – chaired by Transport Scotland – met again in November and continues to use its collective expertise to consider the measures which will help prepare and assist those involved in providing school transport for the future legislative changes.

I hope that PPC members find this information useful and I will be happy to provide further updates as matters transpire at the Committee's request.

Kind regards

**DEREK MACKAY**