

PE1428/G

Petitioner Letter of 31 October 2012

Dear Chris

Please find feedback re the Minister's letter.

1. In the first sentence the Minister mentions investigating alternative routes into Mid Argyll. This understates the importance of the work on the A83 Rest and Be Thankful and A82 at Pulpit Rock, it is not only Mid Argyll which is impacted on, indeed it is the further away communities of Islay, Jura, and Kintyre and Oban which feel significant problems due to the type of road dependant industries based there. Haulage firms for timber and whisky encounter driver hours problems due to the longer detour or congested emergency bypass, costs for the additional miles for timber haulage cannot be passed on to the industry. Kintyre is Argyll and Bute's main agricultural area, it is significantly impacted on by road closures due to the legislation regarding the transport of animals and the additional costs of importing animal feed and bedding which are passed on if the road is closed and a detour applied. There are at least 50,000 constituents of Argyll and Bute for whom the A83 is the baseline for economic and personal transport, major detours via the A82 or delays due to the emergency detour will impact significantly on this many people in Argyll and Bute, never mind those trying to enter Argyll and Bute.
2. In considering alternative routes the Minister should bring forward plans to establish a RoRo ferry service between Campbeltown and the Ayrshire coast using spare capacity in the existing Calmac Fleet.
3. Regarding the study – It must take into account the economic impact of the long term solutions implementation, if the works lead to many months of long delays many small businesses in Argyll and Bute will be severely affected – there is no point in the cure killing the patient.
4. In relation to point 2. Traffic data flow and modelling should be undertaken as a urgent matter so that the scale of diverted traffic is understood. If the A82 is closed and the A83 has a landslide the impact might well be significant gridlock and so would add weight to putting in place long term alternatives such as in 2 above.

Councillor Douglas Philand
Argyll First: Time for Change