

25 February 2014

Andrew Howlett  
Assistant Clerk  
Public Petitions Committee  
Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Howlett,

Many thanks for your letter of 6 February to members of the A9 Safety Group asking for a response to the petition received by the Public Petitions Committee from Mike Burns regarding average speed cameras on the A9.

SCDI were invited to join the A9 Safety Group in November last year following concerns we raised that the group lacked representation on it from the business community, and a concern we had that their recommendation for average speed cameras did not take account of any economic impact on this vital route.

Having had the opportunity to now attend two of the meetings, it is clear to see that as a group the members are committed to looking at every and all measures which are believed to reduce accidents along this key road. The group performs a useful role in coordinating action to improve the driving experience of the A9 and the steps which can be taken to improve its safety. The work done on increasing awareness of dangerous driving activities, identifying key parts of the road for maintenance and improvement, as well as promoting safety measures should be welcomed.

On the issue of average speed cameras, SCDI do not share the view that these are the right solution and instead believe that action should focus on other enforcement activities, driver awareness campaigns, and other steps to improve the safety of the route.

As your petitioner will no doubt be aware, the A9 is the major transport artery connecting the Highlands to central Scotland, on which the economy of the region relies. I am sure he shares our view that the Scottish Government's commitment to dual this vital link is to be welcomed as recognition of how economically important this road is.

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We understand the desire of the Scottish Government to see action taken to address the number of serious or fatal accidents along this road whilst the longer term solution of dualling is being delivered. But we do not share the A9 Safety Group's view that average speed cameras are the right solution, and do not think the wider implications of the proposed scheme on the region's economy have been adequately taken into account.

SCDI's Highlands & Islands Committee are concerned that average speed cameras could hit our economic competitiveness by increasing journey times and reinforce a perception of the route as dangerous, which could discourage visitors or investors from the region and may cause unnecessary economic harm. We are also concerned that average speed cameras may take drivers' attention off the road and onto their speedometers, and that having such a long stretch of perceived enforcement may impact on driver concentration.

Whilst average speed cameras may be part of the solution on some limited sections of the road, we believe that proposals for their installation along the entire stretch of single carriageway road between Inverness and Perth could have a damaging impact on the economic health of the north.

I trust this gives sufficient background to our involvement in the A9 Safety Group and our belief that the group performs an important role in highlighting measures that are believed to address safety concerns along this road. However we do not share the view that average speed cameras are the right solution.

Best wishes,

**Fraser Grieve**  
**Highlands & Islands Director**  
**SCDI**