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**TRANSPORT
SCOTLAND**
CÒMHDHAIL ALBA

Ned Sharratt
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Your ref:
PE1503

Our ref:
A8775477

Date:
7 July 2014

Dear Ned,

Public Petition PE1503 – A9 average speed cameras

Thank you for your letter of 19 June advising me that Public Petition PE1503 has now been closed. You also asked me to consider a number of items raised by the petitioner and my response is detailed below.

The economic or cost-benefit analysis used to calculate the cost savings in casualty reductions was established using the standard method of assessing the first year rate of return set out in the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) *Road Safety Engineering Manual*.

This methodology compares the cost of the system to its expected casualty reduction savings, using a 5 year baseline of accident figures. The safety benefits were conservatively based on the operation of other camera systems. Across the UK, an assessment of permanent average speed camera systems shows a 61% reduction in fatal and serious accidents. For the A9, a reduction of 19% was assumed, being the most conservative estimate thought likely for the route.

Even this modest assessment of benefits indicated that average speed cameras would save a total of 18 injury accidents in the first year of operation, including 2 fatal accidents. These accidents have a total cost to the economy of £3.9 million. This was sufficient to support the A9 Safety Group's recommendation that average speed cameras be deployed as an accident remediation measure on the A9, as this saving is considerably greater than the scheme cost.

Journey times also have an economic impact, but these are not part of the assessment of the safety benefits. The latest Traffic Modelling and Analysis assessment report was published on the A9 Safety Group website (www.A9road.info) in February, which gives wider content to the consideration of economic factors.

With regard to journey time improvements, the HGV speed limit pilot recently approved by Parliament will reduce queuing and overtaking on the A9 by allowing the slowest moving HGVs to travel legally at higher speeds. This will save 150,000 vehicle hours per year and reduce delay caused by these vehicles for other A9 users. It will also reduce levels of queuing and overtaking associated with these slow moving vehicles.

The A9 was closed or significantly disrupted for over 540 hours during the course of 2013 for weather and accident related incidents. This equates to over 22 days where the route was not available to support the Highland economy. Average speed cameras will reduce the number of the most serious and disruptive accidents and in doing so, will improve journey time reliability.

In reality, journey times are only materially impacted for those travelling in excess of the national speed limit and there is no reasonable argument that would advocate allowing vehicles to ignore speed limits to boost the economy. Actual measurements from counter sites on the A9 show that journey times have increased by 3 minutes, on average, over the 24 miles where the initial average speed cameras have been installed between Perth and Pitlochry.

The A9 Safety Group includes representation from 14 organisations covering a wide spectrum of interests related to the economic importance of the A9 as well as the safety performance. As well as having considerable demonstrable experience of everyday driver issues provided by the road safety specialists and policing representatives on the group, a balance to these views is also provided through the involvement of the Institute of Advanced Motorists, arguably the biggest independent motorists group in the UK and a leading road safety charity.

Given the technical and enforcement nature of discussions at the Group, it is not appropriate for it to be a public forum. The minutes are published and we have had a series of public information events. A detailed website is maintained providing information on the work of the Group. Members of the public wishing any further information about road safety on the A9, or having any comments or suggestions, can contact the Group through the website or by writing to the A9 Safety Group, care of Transport Scotland at the above address.

We have consulted widely on A9 safety. The A9 Safety Group held 6 public exhibitions between February and April 2014 at key population centres throughout the length of the A9. The Minister for Transport and Veterans met with SCDI and the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) on 28 February and met Inverness FSB on 18 June to discuss their concerns.

The A9 Safety Group has recently conducted a survey of 300 car drivers on the A9, to obtain direct feedback from users on their driving experience and perceptions of safety on the route. A report has been prepared to present the findings of the survey, and this will be published on the A9 Safety Group's website (www.A9road.info) during July 2014. A copy is attached for your records. It is intended that a similar driver survey will be conducted at the same time next year, following the installation of average speed cameras and commencement of the HGV pilot, to help inform the evaluation of the impact of these measures on the operation and safety of the route.

The A9 Safety Group website will continue to provide up-to-date and accurate information on Scotland's longest road to keep users informed.

I hope this is helpful.

Yours sincerely

Stewart Leggett
Strategic Impacts Manager (Chair of A9 Safety Group)
Transport Scotland