



PUBLIC PETITION NO.

PE01503

Name of petitioner

Mike Burns on behalf of Average Speed Cameras on the A9 are not the answer

Petition title

Review of A9 speed camera proposals'

Petition summary

The A9 Safety Group recently proposed an Average Speed Camera System on the A9 in order to reduce fatalities. This group believes this is the incorrect decision based on official statistics which show that breaking the speed limit accounts for only 2% of accidents on the A9, whereas overtaking manoeuvres account for nearly 50% of A9 accidents. We believe that the A9 Safety Group has not investigated adequate alternatives to deal with the majority cause of A9 accidents and the modelling used to propose the A9 system is flawed. We believe there should be a full parliamentary debate on the proposal along with the reformation of the A9 Safety Group to allow representation from car drivers, who make up over 95% of A9 road users, yet have not been involved in an A9 Safety Group meetings. We believe as the evidence is flawed and does not have full parliamentary support, the A9 Speed Camera System must be delayed indefinitely until an investigation is carried out to look at the workings of the A9 Safety Group, Transport Scotland and investigate other proposals which would have a direct impact on overtaking, which is the main official cause of accidents on the A9.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the petition

In response to the A9 Speed Camera Proposal, a Facebook campaign was set up to allow interested individuals to discuss alternatives as well as express frustration that the A9 Safety Group had not understood the real problems of A9 driving. This group has nearly 9000 followers, with the majority statistically being based in IV and KW postcode areas. It has been seen by over 1/2 million unique viewers since creation. It has comments in excess of 15,000 of discussion and debate on alternatives and photographic evidence of poor driving at low speed, poor road condition and other elements of driver frustration which Average Speed Cameras will not resolve. Official statistics show that Mean Speeds on all A9 data counters falls below the legal speed limit.

- A 20 point Interim plan for the A9 was published to discuss and investigate real alternatives to the Average Speed Camera proposal in August 2013. This included systems to prevent overtaking such as lane control, spacing control, improving visibility with vastly improved maintenance of the road and roadside, alternatives to drivers who wish not to use the A9 until dualing is complete and options for other A9 road users. This was sent to Transport Scotland and MSP's but was never debated in parliament nor did Transport Scotland issue a response despite having a working group dealing with the plan.

- An independent Survey Monkey was set up due to continuing blocking tactics of the Scottish Parliament Petitions department to allow A9 users to make their view heard and also suggest alternatives. This has so far received over 1700 responses with 91% stating they believe A9 Average Speed Cameras will not address safety in the current climate on the A9.
- An MSP was approached to help the campaign proceed with their official petition at the Scottish Parliament who we believe did approach the Petition Team and was assured there was no obvious reason why the petition was continually being blocked.
- A media campaign has been set up to publish information gleaned from FOI requests which prove that speed is not the main factor in A9 incidents, Police Scotland state they do not record Incident Speeds in the 544 page FOI document received on every A9 incident since 2007. It also appears that Transport Scotland had advanced plans for an A9 Average Speed Camera system for some years in advance of the announcement and an FOI request is still in progress to ascertain the level of engagement and lobbying there may have been with such companies.
- Voters have been encouraged to write to their MSP's on the issue and we believe this has been done, though there has still not been any public debate in parliament on the proposal nor has there been any delay whilst flaws in evidence and statistics are debated as well as alternatives, which FOI shows have not been investigated.
- Campaign groups have offered to meet the Transport Minister, who has ignored all correspondence personally with the campaign, whilst the Chief Executive of Transport Scotland, David Middleton, has refused 2 times to personally meet campaigners to discuss the concerns raised by nearly 9000 A9 users.
- The campaign offered to set up a cross political party, cross agency conference to discuss the campaign and also alternatives to the A9 Average Speed Camera system. The Transport Minister and the A9 Safety Group never responded to the invitation to the conference whilst MSPs and Transport Scotland did so. Therefore the conference could not proceed.

Petition background information

The Scottish Transport Minister recently announced the installation of an Average Speed Camera system on the A9 based on a recommendation by the A9 Safety Group.

The model used by Transport Scotland and the A9 Safety Group only covers a 24 hour period. Statistics show that there is a higher proportion of accidents during Tourist Season months therefore the model is highly subjective and selective on the time frame used.

A recent report to the Department for Transport calls into question claims made by the authors of the A9 Camera Proposal as being unable to quantify their claims and the A9 report does also stress the A9 is a unique case.

The comparison with the A77 SPECS system is not a true like for like comparison due to the diversity of the road types and sheer distance, with the A9 proposal being 5 times greater in length than the A77 system.

The recorded mean speeds of the A9 according to Transport Scotland all fall below the legal speed limits, therefore Average Speed cameras will not resolve any mean speed problems.

Despite evidence that there are a number of drivers exceeding the speed limit on the A9, only 28 accidents according to Transport Scotland publications are due to breaking the speed limit. Police Scotland FOI received by the campaign states that speed is generally not recorded in Incident reports and can only be inferred. Transport Scotland statistics show over 550 accidents in the same time frame were caused by overtaking. Average Speed Cameras will not resolve overtaking manoeuvres on a road where the mean speeds and average speeds recorded by campaigners during peak tourist season all fall below the legal speed limit.

Whilst the A9 Safety Group state a driver education programme on overtaking and speeding would follow, official Transport Scotland statistics show that the majority of speeding offences on the A9 are from drivers outwith Scotland.

The campaign has offered a range of alternatives which directly address the overtaking problems, based on real driver experiences of the A9. It is clear that even prior to the launch of the campaign, alternatives such as Lane and Space control systems as used widely in Continental Europe, have not been investigated to reduce the direct causes of over 550 accidents on the A9, overtaking, as opposed to 28 accidents caused by breaking the speed limit. Therefore, there is a legal duty under Health and Safety Act 1974 for the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and A9 Safety Group to investigate and publish results in full of all alternatives to satisfy legal requirements. Until this is done, A9 Average Speed Cameras should not be installed.

Unique web address

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/GettingInvolved/Petitions/thereala9problem>

Related information for petition

Further details on the current A9 Average Speed Camera Campaign can be found at www.facebook.com/thereala9problem

Do you wish your petition to be hosted on the Parliament's website to collect signatures online?

YES

How many signatures have you collected so far?

0

Closing date for collecting signatures online

20 / 12 / 2013

Comments to stimulate online discussion

- 91% of A9 Drivers surveyed do not believe Average Speed Cameras will resolve the current safety issues
- Dualling the A9 is the only solution but the campaign is fully aware this is not an immediate option, however, realistic interim solutions which address real issues need to be implemented after investigation.
- Despite assurances, even if the system goes ahead, no statement has been made on the system removal after dualling
- Accidents are likely to rise in the first year under an A9 SPECS system which is a negligent position to take by Transport Scotland
- There is no evidence that alternative systems such as Lane and Spacing control have been fully investigated as an alternative to directly address the main cause of A9 accidents which is overtaking
- The Modelling used for the A9 Camera proposal was flawed with a limited time frame

comparison

- The A9 Safety Group has not involved any bodies which can clearly represent the main batch of A9 users which is car drivers
- HGV's already travel at 50mph and despite being involved in more accidents than average, official statistics show they are in most cases not at fault
- The A9 needs a comprehensive interim solution which covers a wide range of issues as drivers have made clear and it appears that the A9 Safety Group along with Transport Scotland have ignored more fundamental issues as to why the accidents are happening, most of which are overtaking and not speeding.

We believe the following should happen as a result of a successful petition

- A indefinite delay on installation until there has been a full review and investigation of alternative proposals which has not been demonstrated by Transport Scotland
- '- A revised modelling of A9 Average Speed Cameras based on a 365 day model and not a 24 hour model as currently presented
- The model to be based on actual camera location proposals on A9 as this model does not yet exist
- The same depth of investigation and modelling also applied to lane control systems which outlaw overtaking which is the determined root cause of over 550 A9 incidents in the previous 9 years as opposed to 27 assessed to be blamed on speeding
- The same depth of investigation into the Double Chevron road marking system and enforcing space restrictions or 500 meters between HGV's to promote safer overtaking as per continental Europe, whilst enforcing a ban on HGV Overtaking on the length of the A9 until Dualling is complete.
- A full 3 year trial of allowing HGV's to travel at 50mph on the A9 to be completed before any Camera Installation work, as the Camera proposal had a 3 year lead time before full effects would be known, so the same principle must be applied
- The A9 Safety Group to be disbanded in its current form and regrouped to include representation for Car Drivers in a balanced manner to reflect their status as completing over 95% of all journeys on the A9
- A full independent investigation into the conduct of the A9 Safety Group
- A full investigation into contact between Transport Scotland and manufacturers of Average Speed Camera systems over the past 4 years in relation to the A9 to ensure there has been no improper lobbying based on a business case as suggested by minutes of the A9 safety Group