

PE1503/I

Public Petitions Committee
T3.40,
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP

Our Ref : NE/17/1/AC/1791

Your Ref :

Date : 27 February 2014

For the attention of Mr Andrew Howlett

Dear Sirs

**SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT PUBLIC PETITION PE1503 ON A REVIEW OF A9
SPEED CAMERA PROPOSALS**

Thank you for your letters of 6 February 2014 to John Smith and myself, requesting our views in relation to the above petition. As John and I attend the meeting as representatives of BEAR Scotland Ltd, I am providing a response on behalf of the company.

My response to the questions raised is as follows:

- *What are your views on what the petition seeks and the discussions that took place at the meeting on 28 January?*

BEAR Scotland Ltd supports the proposals to install an Average Speed Camera System on the A9 between Dunblane and Inverness and believes this will significantly improve road safety along this section of the route. Analysis of road safety performance at other sites across the UK where similar systems have been installed has shown substantial reductions in fatal and serious injury collisions.

The system achieves this by generating a high level of speed limit compliance; thereby lowering the mean traffic speed on the route, which research has shown will reduce collision rates. It is not simply a case of concentrating on collisions where excessive speed has been highlighted as a contributory factor. Irrespective of whether excessive speed is the root cause of a collision or not, the speed of vehicles involved will, in many cases, contribute towards the severity of the injuries sustained; consequently the lower the mean speed of vehicles, the lower the projected collision severities. In addition, a lowered mean vehicle speed gives drivers additional time to react to an emerging situation and potentially avoid a collision, thereby reducing the projected collision numbers.

I should add that I find the objections to this system surprising, given the fact that it will simply enforce the current legal speed limit (or a higher limit in the case of HGVs above 7.5 tonnes).

In terms of the suggestion that the installation of an Average Speed Camera System is being viewed as the only solution to the safety issues on the A9, I should advise

you that this was never the case. The A9 varies significantly in nature over its entire length, which produces a variety safety issues. This situation is far too complex to be addressed by a single treatment. Consequently, the Average Speed Camera System has always been considered as one measure amongst a number of proposals that form an Interim Safety Plan for the route, which will cover the time period until the route is dualled. Additional measures that are being progressed as part of this Plan include:

- The installation of 'two way' traffic signing on single carriageway sections to reinforce the carriageway type to drivers. This has been completed;
- The clearing of vegetation from overtaking and junction sightlines, as mentioned by Mr Burns. This is currently underway;
- The Replacement of roadside furniture with passive safety alternatives, which collapse more easily when impacted, and protection of hazards in areas where there have been higher than average instances of vehicles leaving the carriageway. This is currently underway;
- An ongoing annual review of collisions statistics for the route to identify statistically significant collision trends, which will then be treated;
- A study into driver frustration on the route , which is currently underway;
- Development of an A9 website, which will hold pertinent information on the route. An interim site is in operation at present with the full site being launched shortly.
- Development of safety campaigns specifically addressing issues on the route. These will utilise the aforementioned A9 website, but will also use other forms of media to maximise exposure and therefore impact.

With regards to potential safety campaigns, I note that concerns were raised over the potential effectiveness of a speed awareness campaigns due to the geographical origins of speeding drivers. I should clarify that whilst some areas in England were highlighted, the most noticeable concentration of speeding drivers reside in the Scottish central belt and other major urban populations in Scotland, including Aberdeen and Inverness.

I also note from the discussions at the meeting of 28 January 2014, Mr Burn's statistical analysis of accident patterns on the route and conclusion that overtaking is the biggest safety issue. I agree that this is one of the safety issues on the route and the A9 Safety Group will be addressing this as a result. However, I must disagree with the stated scale of this issue. I am unaware of the geographical extents that the quoted collision statistics cover, but for single carriageway sections between Perth and Scrabster the statistics provided by Police Scotland, covering the same time period, records approximately 90 collisions that involved an overtaking manoeuvre; significantly less than the 550 stated and approximating 11% of all injury collisions. So whilst addressing inappropriate overtaking is a valid point, it is important that we do not simply focus on this one aspect, but provide a range of treatments to address the various safety issues across the route, thereby maximising reductions in collision numbers. I believe delivery of an Average Speed Camera System and the other measures contained in the Interim Safety Plan will help to achieve this.

- *In addition to the Institute of Advanced Motorists recently joining, has the A9 Safety Group considered inviting other organisations such as the AA to be members of the Group?*

No discussions have taken place over the inclusion of the AA or similar organisations into the Group. However, BEAR Scotland would have no objection to their involvement if this was tabled and if other members agreed that they could contribute positively to the aims of the Group.

I hope these comments are helpful.

Yours faithfully
for BEAR Scotland Ltd

Alan Campbell
Minor Improvements / Traffic and Road Safety Manager