With regard and all due respect to the Transport Scotland letter I feel some issues must be addressed prior to Petition 1610 being reconsidered.

Firstmost being that the position laid out by Transport Scotland does not take into account the potential socio-economic benefits to the region of Dumfries and Galloway, it's businesses and citizens. There are currently poor transport links to the rest of Scotland, the UK and further afield and it is my view that an improved, preferably dualed A75 would go a long way to improve this, with the potential to bring in businesses to invest in the region, reversing the current skills drain away from Dumfries and Galloway. Furthermore, with the current move towards centralisation of health and council services towards Dumfries, improved road links will enhance the lives of service users resident away from Dumfries who otherwise may decide that the journey is too long or dangerous to take for their appointments. These trips to hospital are not always routine either but in a lot of cases are emergencies. I personally have experienced on more than one occasion, having to make the journey to Dumfries Infirmary when the road has been seriously congested by Ferry traffic adding not inconsiderable time to the journey and witnessed some of the most dangerous driving imaginable.

Secondly, while the Transport summit was most welcome, there have been no concrete agreements to improve the A75 or to move towards improvements. As it stands at the moment, Dumfries & Galloway is at a disadvantage for capitol infrastructure project funding due to the criteria currently set out by the Scottish Government. This risks making the residents of Dumfries & Galloway into second class citizens, perceived or otherwise. While the ultimate objective of myself and the Dual The A75 group with which I am affiliated is to see the A75 made dual for it's entirety, it would be foolish of me/us to presume that this could happen all at once. However I would seek to have an commitment that all future upgrades to the A75 be dual carriageway, with a view to eventually linking all of these into one dual carriageway for the length of the A75.

Thirdly, there is a grave danger of a significant reduction in future usage of the Cairnryan ferry ports, with their main alternative ports already or soon to be served with fully dual carriageway links to the M6 and the motorway network. These being Holyhead in Wales, served by the A55 and Heysham in Lancashire, served by the soon to open Morecambe Bay Link. If the A75 remains as it is, freight customers may well look to the easier accessed alternative Irish Sea ports and their inherently reduced time to reach them. Therefore investment has to be made not only to attract employment to the area but also to protect existing employment. This also raises the point that the A75 is not only “the road to Stranraer” but in reality is the main road to Ireland and in particular to Belfast, which as it stands is the only UK capital not linked to the motorway network.

Finally while it is to be welcomed that Transport Scotland's figures show an overall reduction in accidents on the A75, the figures showing a rise in 2013/2014 show that there is no room for complacency and that further action is required, particularly
when faced with the statistic that 34% of these involved HGVs. This as shown by Transport Scotland is well above the national average and it does not take a huge leap of imagination to realise that the potential severity of these accidents would also be a lot higher.

In closing, I wish to thank you for your consideration of this petition and hope that I have illustrated that the situation of the A75 is inherently more complicated than mere statistics can show or indeed than what the current funding criteria for major infrastructure projects covers.

Yours sincerely,
Matt Halliday