

Petitioner submission of 6 September 2022

PE1610/LL: Upgrade the A75

As for submitting further information, I would just like to state that the situation remains the same as before with the same issues arising and that there is further evidence of trade moving away from Scotland to ports in England and Wales, with one company stating that their use of the Cairnryan ports has fallen from 50% to 20% in the past 18 months. They are not alone in this and with some £37bn of freight reportedly travelling along the A75 annually, this is a drastic and worrying reduction.

Again, there has been much interest taken in this issue among politicians in Northern Ireland, which I am sure will become more coherent upon the resumption of the Stormont Assembly. The UK government as well has highlighted the inadequacies of the situation, with its Union Connectivity report recommending that funding should be made available for major upgrades. While I am not naive about the fair amount of political point scoring involved in that announcement and about the Scottish Government's concerns of a "power grab", it would be a failure of responsibility, to this area of Scotland, if all available funding opportunities were not considered and explored fully.

The South West of Scotland continues to be disadvantaged in comparison to other areas with better connectivity and a major upgrading of transport links is essential to encourage investment, to safeguard the ferry links between Scotland & Ireland and to greatly improve the lives and wellbeing of the citizens of Galloway and Ayrshire. There is a "Green" argument in the current era of the Climate Emergency against new road building, however in the case of the A75 (& A77), I would argue that the Loch Ryan - Northern Ireland link being the shortest crossing, would actually reduce journey times in comparison with the English & Welsh ports and thus the time that vehicles are creating emissions. Improving the roads would also make it easier to capitalise on this area's natural resources by easing the transportation of infrastructure and hardware required for the exploitation of wind, hydro & tidal energy production. Also in these times of uncertainty as to the cost of living and food security, the short sea crossing is vital to the timely delivery of "just in time" perishable goods, again making the case for investment in the A75 vital.

Finally, a lot is being made by Transport Scotland about investment being made on the A75 in terms of the amount being spent on maintenance, once again I feel the need to point out that similar “investment” is already being made on roads all over Scotland , what is required is the sort of capital investment that is being spent in the A9, the Aberdeen bypass, the A96 , the Forth Crossing and the central belt motorways.

Thank you for continuing to consider and to act upon this petition.