

PE1992/M: Dual the A9 and improve road safety

Rhoda Grant MSP written submission, 17 December 2025

I would like to thank the Committee for allowing my submission to be heard today. I am very sorry I cannot attend in person as I sit on another committee that meets at the same time.

I would however like to reiterate what I have said previously on this subject – the A9 is the gateway to the Highlands and beyond and it affects my constituents all over the region. Many of them have contacted me to share their concerns about the slow progress on the duelling project and the impact it has had on their communities.

As we approach the end of 2025, the deadline by which the SNP promised full dualling to Inverness, still only two of the eleven sections have been completed with another two in progress.

This delay is costing lives. Since 1 January 2021, there have been 170 collisions in the Highland Council area alone, 23 of which have been fatal. This equates to one death every eleven weeks. 2024 was the worst year for accidents with 49 injury collisions in the Highland Council area, two thirds (67.3%) of which were serious or fatal.

Some would argue that it is not dangerous roads which cause accidents but dangerous drivers. While it is true that driver behaviour plays a key role in the safety of our roads, their quality can be improved upon, and a dual carriageway would mitigate much driver error. The A9 carries the biggest share of harm for all accidents in Highland Council area, currently accounting for 29.6% of all injury collisions across Highland trunk roads from 2021.

The First Minister has said that the government remains committed to completing the dualling programme by the end of 2035 and that the necessary funding will be in place to do so. This is not sufficient however to reassure the public of what progress is being made.

As this petition requests, in order for the public to have confidence in the completion of the project, the Scottish government must publish a revised timetable and a detailed plan for the dualling of each section.

Therefore, I recently asked the First Minister if he would commit to introducing a duty of candour for the A9 project as recommended by the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee to ensure that the parliament and the public are fully informed about progress, delays, and financial challenges in real time.

We need an inquiry to assess what has gone wrong with this project and to examine the progress that has been made, with a new realistic timeframe for the delivery of this promise. I unequivocally support petition PE1992.