

Dear First Minister,

I write to you as chairperson of the Rest and Be Thankful Campaign, a group which represents over 1500 Argyll businesses. Over the past few weeks, we have twice written to Michael Matheson and sadly received no response.

Regarding the Rest and Be Thankful (RABT), whilst we welcome the decision to select option one for the permanent solution of the landslide blighted section of the A83, we fear a further consultation simply delays the process – the phrase “kicking it into the long grass” springs to mind. Especially when option one, the Glen Croe route, was the chosen option from the A83 Trunk Road Study - summary report published by Jacobs, issued in 2012.

Surely, after nine years of consulting the Scottish Government and Transport Scotland can choose the best solution rather than going through a lengthy and expensive consultation process. Based on this our members would like the permanent solution fast tracked, which is well within the Scottish Government’s power and we would ask for this to be seriously considered.

Our comments and feedback to last week’s announcement are as follows.

The timber road route should be upgraded as a short-term solution this summer and not in the suggested 18 months.

- Argyll businesses have faced the issues of landslides for many years. However, the situation has worsened over the past year and in our opinion it has now become a national emergency and requires immediate action.
- The 100,000 tons of unstable material could swamp any further mitigation measures put in place on the A83 and Old Military Road (OMR) and make the roads impassable. This could easily happen when we next have an extended period of rainfall.
- Savings in further mitigation work could go towards upgrading the forestry road.

The long-term solution should be selected from the 2012; The A83 Trunk Road Study and based on the delivery of the most sustainable outcome

- Any well-developed permanent solution needs to be open 24/7 (even when it rains) without fear of being buried under tons of rock and mud, and will have less environmental impact than the landslides, catchpits, netting and OMR bund we are currently experiencing.
- Our understanding of costs and timescales from similar schemes in Norway show a tunnel could be built in three years at a cost of £50-60m, and not the £250-800m confirmed by Transport Scotland.

Members of The RABT Campaign group represent a cross section of business sectors and we would welcome the chance to meet with your officials to discuss how we might help cut through the lengthy timescales and fast track decision making.

Regards,

John Gurr
Chairperson, The RABT Campaign
22 March 2021



Contact us

✉ info@therestandbethankfulcampaign.com

f @crisisattherest

🐦 @crisisrest