

08 March 2021

Dear Mr Matheson,

I write to you as Chair of The Rest and Be Thankful Campaign, a recently formed group of key Argyll business leaders to demand a resolution to the ongoing crisis at the Rest and Be Thankful (RABT).

In August last year the RABT experienced debris (described as boulders as big as cars) slide onto the road. This severe landslide thankfully did not result in anyone being injured. Sadly, this was not the case a few days later when a fatal landslide at Stonehaven led to three deaths and serious injuries to others.

With £80m being spent on temporary solutions at the RABT, which clearly hasn't worked – the recent £1m investment on barriers on the OMR is an example of this – and no permanent solution in sight we fear a fatal landslide is looming, will this be the only way the Scottish Government will sit up and take the road access at RABT seriously.

Aside from the growing safety concerns, the increased landslides and future landslides expected have, and will continue to have, a significant impact on local communities and businesses. Our group has been formed to demand a better response from government.

Despite Argyll having a small population relative to Scotland as a whole, it generates significantly the economy of Scotland from whisky, timber, food production and tourism. As businesses we find our operating costs are increasing, the ability to meet tight deadlines particularly with fresh produce is being greatly affected by the constant road closures – we have recorded over 200 days the road was either closed or disrupted in 2020.

This is damaging the region's ability to recover as we emerge from the restrictions imposed by Covid-19. A fix in 10 years, which the Scottish Government has suggested, will have a devastating impact on both the local and national economy.

As a group we have two demands for the Scottish Government:

1. To adopt one of the solutions defined in the 2013 A83 Trunk Road Route Study produced by Jacobs for Transport Scotland and complete the build by May 2024.
2. To upgrade the Timber Road for use as an alternative temporary route for all traffic while the permanent solution is delivered.

We would like to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience as an opportunity to discuss our concerns, the impact this is having to our businesses and options for a speedy solution to this crisis.

Look forward to hearing from you,

John Gurr

Chair of The Rest and Be Thankful Campaign



Contact us

✉ info@therestandbethankfulcampaign.com

f [@crisisattherest](https://www.facebook.com/crisisattherest)

🐦 [@crisisrest](https://twitter.com/crisisrest)