

**Fiona Hyslop MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Transport**

Scottish Government

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**Date:** 11 August 2025

**Our ref:** HCoC/2025/FH\_TM01

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

**RE: Proposals to cut the national speed limit on single carriageways**

We are writing today on behalf of Caithness, Cairngorms, Inverness, Moray and West Highland Chambers of Commerce to express our deep concern regarding reports the Scottish Government is considering proposals to cut the national speed limit on single carriageways to 50mph.

As Highland & Moray Chambers of Commerce, we are the foremost business network in the region, collectively representing some 1600 businesses.

First of all, it is worth emphasising the consultation launched in November 2024 was specifically around the desire to improve road safety. The Highland area alone comprises 6,785km of roads, with only a small proportion being dualled. Tragically, an average of 20 people lose their lives each year in fatal road accidents in the Highlands.

However, Highland & Moray Chambers of Commerce do not believe that lowering the national speed limit from 60mph to 50mph on single carriageway roads would improve road safety.

We would highlight the following concerns:

**Road conditions** – The Highlands and Moray roads network is comprised of a mixture of single carriageway and single-track roads. While the A9, A96 and A82 trunk roads have had some improvements, the dualling of sections of the A9 and A96 are a decade late and the vast majority of roads maintained by the Highland and Moray Councils have suffered from many years of significant underinvestment. Despite recent efforts to catch up with the maintenance backlog and increase capital spending, the region still suffers from severely degraded road surfaces, numerous potholes and a notable lack of road markings. We believe the condition of the roads is a considerably greater danger to road safety than the existing national speed limit.

**Driver behaviour** – As indicated above, we believe the single biggest risk to road safety is the poor condition of the road surface and the lack of appropriate signage and white lining. Nonetheless, a reduction in the speed limit to 50mph is likely to result in driver frustration. This may increase the occurrence of drivers making bad judgements, such as overtaking recklessly or on blind bends.

**Impact on connectivity** – As the voice of Highland and Moray businesses, Highland & Moray Chambers of Commerce are acutely aware of the disadvantages caused by our inadequate transport infrastructure. The longstanding underinvestment in our local roads, coupled with the delayed dualling of the A9 and A96 and lack of vital improvements to the A82, makes journey times unacceptably long for businesses and residents. Public transport coverage is patchy outside of the city of Inverness, with train journeys typically 3.5 - 4.5 hours – a travel time that has not improved since the Victorian age. As a result, Highland and Moray communities rely disproportionately on car travel. Our remote and rural location further means that residents regularly travel long distances, and it is not always practical to car share.

We believe that journey times will inevitably increase, and this will further disadvantage our business community and hamper growth. It is also worth highlighting the potential socioeconomic and health consequences of reduced speed limits, particularly for labouring mothers travelling by road to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness from Caithness and Lochaber.

With £100bn potential of 'transformational' projects in the Highlands and Islands over the next 15 years, the Highlands and Moray need roads and transport connectivity fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

We urge the Scottish Government to have a more holistic view of road safety. This should look beyond speed considerations on urban roads networks and consider the implications for rural areas and the significant and immediate dangers posed by the poor standard of the road network.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss further.

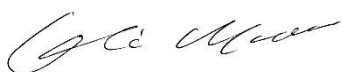
Yours sincerely,



Trudy Morris  
**Chief Executive**  
**Caithness Chamber of Commerce**



Craig Mills  
**Chief Executive**  
**Cairngorms Business Partnership**



Colin Marr  
**Chief Executive**  
**Inverness Chamber of Commerce**



Sarah Medcraf  
**Chief Executive**  
**Moray Chamber of Commerce**



Frazer Coupland  
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