

20 August 2008 - Tolson calls for Firm Commitment on New Forth Crossing

Responding to speculation in the media about the need for a new crossing at the Forth Bridgehead area, Jim Tolson MSP for Dunfermline West commented "When the SNP Government gave a commitment earlier this year to a new crossing; a 'sigh of relief' was heard throughout my constituency from businesses and commuters alike. The delay and congestion on the present bridge causes great frustration to commuters, whether in cars or buses. The concern over the state and longevity of the Forth Road Bridge was beginning to have a negative effect in investment in Fife.

Whilst I have concerns about the funding mechanisms that the Government may use to fund the crossing, I take their commitment to a new bridge at 'face value'. There is nothing in the FETA report of 20 June (Second Internal Inspection of Main Cable-Update Report) to encourage the Government to renege on their commitment.

Recent speculation in the media has been driven by two sources, the tunnel campaigners (Forth TAG) and Forthright Alliance. The Forthright Alliance have campaigned against a new crossing under any circumstances and are now 'grasping at straws' to resurrect the anti-bridge campaign. The tunnel campaigners are bitter that their campaign for a tunnel under the Forth could not withstand the scrutiny of several Scottish Government instigated reports and now turn their attentions onto the work of Transport Scotland and FETA.

It is important that politicians of all parties who care about this issue continue to press the Scottish Government to confirm their commitment to a replacement crossing and, at an early stage, come forward with funding proposals. They cannot let misguided campaigners who do not represent the majority of public opinion, change their course."

Jim Tolson will continue to press the Scottish Government to confirm their commitment to building the new bridge crossing without any delays.