

Response from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)

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Your Ref: -

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By e-mail: tolledbridgesreview@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

29 June 2005

Dear Ms Daddow

## **REVIEW OF TOLLED BRIDGES REVIEW – PHASE TWO CONSULTATION**

Thank you for providing the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) with the opportunity to respond to the above consultation document.

SEPA welcomes the recognition in the current and previous phase of the Tolled Bridges Review that tolled bridges have an impact on the distribution and overall levels of traffic in the surrounding road network, and therefore a part to play in achieving a range of policy goals related to road traffic. As the Phase 1 Review identifies, the distributional effects of variations in toll charges need to be viewed in the context of local air quality management, and in particular of their positive or negative impacts on traffic levels in adjacent Air Quality Management Areas. Again as identified in the Phase 1 Review, the environmental impacts of traffic redistribution due to modifications to the toll regime will vary according to the circumstances around each bridge. At the same time, these local concerns, as detailed in the Phase 1 Review, need to be viewed within the framework of the Executive's overarching national goal of stabilising road traffic volumes at 2001 levels by 2021, making a contribution to reducing pollution and congestion caused by road traffic.

With this in mind, SEPA's response to the specific questions of the Phase 2 consultation relates first and foremost to the management approach to be adopted for the tolled bridges, as addressed by questions 13 to 20 inclusive. While SEPA views the assignment of specific powers and duties as a matter to be agreed between the bodies concerned, the chosen solution should ensure that both a local (or regional) and national perspective is taken to managing the impacts of road traffic through the use of tolls. Once they are established, the National Transport Agency and Regional Transport Partnerships may be able to fulfil this role between them, but will need guidance from the Scottish Executive and Local Authorities to ensure that existing road transport reduction targets, local air quality management objectives and the needs of particular groups such as Blue Badge holders are fully taken into account. SEPA believes that questions 1 to 12, relating to exemptions and charging schemes, are best addressed in the light of these objectives by the bodies who become responsible for managing the bridges.

Cont'd/

Rebecca Daddow  
Scottish Executive

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As a public body committed to openness and transparency, SEPA feels it is appropriate that this response be placed on the public record. If you require further clarification on any aspect of this correspondence, please contact Caspian Richards, Senior Policy Officer, Environmental Strategy, SEPA Corporate Office, at the address shown above.

Yours sincerely

**Professor James C Curran**  
**Head of Environmental Strategy**