



**Highlands & Islands
ENTERPRISE**

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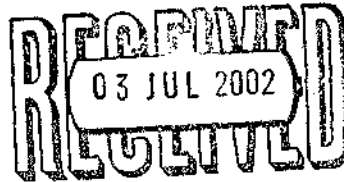
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Iain

A9 TOURISM SIGNAGE – CAIRNGORM MOUNTAIN RAILWAY.

I am sure that you will have shared in the positive enthusiasm felt by everyone when your ministerial colleague, Mike Watson MP, recently opened the new Cairngorm Mountain Funicular Railway. The energy and commitment by all involved has provided an outstanding quality tourism experience and resource within our area. I am sure the new facility will add positively to the visitor experience within the Cairngorms and the proposed National Park.

The ongoing challenge for the operators and us is to promote and market this new mountain experience and so maintain visitor levels and awareness. An important part of the marketing strategy is road signage not only on the northbound A9 trunk road, but also on other approach roads.

The economic benefits from the new funicular are being felt across the whole of the Badenoch and Strathspey area, and recognising this the local community business associations and the Cairngorms Chamber have made strong representations in support of new roads signage. The funicular operator, Cairngorm Mountain Ltd, has of course been actively pursuing a solution with the Scottish Executive and BEAR Scotland Ltd, but there seems to be a delay in dealing with this important issue.

We are aware that proposals for signage improvements within Aviemore are awaiting implementation of works to the major road junction between the B9152 and the Inverdrue/Rothiemurchus Road. We are also aware that the policy of signage on the main A9 restricts main direction signs to a generic nature, rather than including directions to specific visitor attractions and activity centres.

However, I feel that you would share my enthusiasm for making sure that this important new Mountain Railway receives the fullest backing and commitment at all levels, and that permission for appropriate signage adjustments on the A9 can be agreed and expedited quickly.

I believe this is a flagship tourism project for Scotland, and I would be grateful for any help you can provide on this issue.

*Best wishes
Jim*



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