

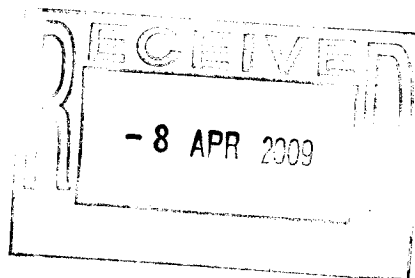
Letter from Deputy First Minister #1

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET - 03 -187
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM 484/09



Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly For Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

06 April 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter dated 6th March regarding a petition received by the Petition's Committee to abolish the Severn Bridge tolls.

The Welsh Assembly Government has no legislative responsibility for the Severn Crossings, which rests with the Department for Transport's Government Representative in England and the Highways Agency. The precise method for the setting of tolling levels is stipulated in the Severn Bridges Act 1992.

The Highways Agency has a Concession Agreement with Severn River Crossing Plc (the Concessionaire) for the day to day operation and maintenance of the bridges. The Assembly Government must abide by the terms of the Concession Agreement made between the Department for Transport and Severn River Crossing Plc.

In view of the above I can confirm that the Assembly Government has conducted no investigations into the feasibility of abolishing the tolls on the Severn bridges. Similarly I have not held any discussions with Department for Transport Ministers on this issue.

*Yours
Ieuan*

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

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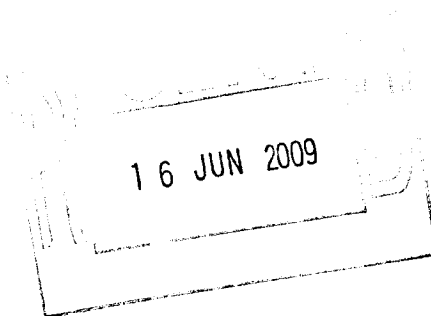
Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-187
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM 915/09

Val Lloyd AM
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



15 June 2009

Dear Val

Thank you for your letter of 18 May concerning the Severn Crossings.

I have met with Department for Transport Ministers on a number of occasions, most recently on 18 May. Whilst Severn Crossings issues are a potential discussion item at these meetings it has not been possible to do so in the time available with many other transport subjects to cover.

It will be of interest to your Committee that the First Minister wrote to the Rt Hon Geoff Hoon MP, Secretary of State at the Department for Transport, on 17 March 2009 regarding the issue of payment by debit and credit cards. In his reply the Secretary of State said that the working group commissioned to look into the feasibility of such a payment method had presented its report to the Highways Agency who were in discussion with Severn River Crossing.

In addition my Transport officials do attend regular Severn Crossings liaison meetings with English counterparts where all operational and maintenance aspects of running the crossings can come up for discussion. The last meeting took place on 3 June where the question was asked on what developments have occurred in the interim.

I understand from the dialogue at that meeting that the Highways Agency has an internal meeting scheduled for July to further progress their proposals. In the meantime they are preparing an interim statement on their position, which as soon as it is received I will write to your Committee informing you accordingly.

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-187
Ein cyf/Our ref MB DFM 804/09

Sandy Mewies AM
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

28 September 2009

Dear Sandy

I am writing further to our recent correspondence concerning the use of debit and credit cards in paying the Severn Crossings' toll.

We have been pressing the Highways Agency throughout the summer for their interim statement but due to their continuing internal debate this has been delayed. We now expect it later in the autumn.

In the meantime my Transport officials will continue their dialogue with the Highways Agency through the regular Severn Crossing liaison meetings at which they will seek an early as possible release of the interim statement. I will of course write to you with a copy as soon as we receive it.

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Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref PET-03-187
Ein cyf/Our ref MB DFM 0989 09

Sandy Mewies AM
Petitions Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

25 November 2009

Dee Sandy

Further to my letter of 28 September, I am sending you an updated response to the position regarding the use of debit and credit cards in paying the Severn toll.

On 18 November Assembly Government Transport officials attended a Severn Bridge liaison meeting with English counterparts and Bridge operatives at which it was confirmed the Department for Transport has proposed the necessary amendments to the secondary legislation to permit debit and credit card payments at the Severn Crossings. It is anticipated that introduction will be in the latter half of 2010.

*Jon
Ieuan*

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

Ieuan Wyn Jones AC/AM
Dirprwy Brif Weinidog /Deputy First Minister



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-03-187
Ein cyf/Our ref DFM 6610/09

Val Lloyd AM
97 Pleasant Street,
Morrison,
Swansea,
SA6 6HJ.

14 January 2010

Dear Val,

I am responding to your letter of 17 December regarding the petition to abolish the Severn Bridge tolls.

The Severn Bridges Act 1992 allowed for a maximum 30 year period for the collection of tolls by Severn River Crossing Plc to service the debt of constructing the new bridge. However the tolls not only finance the original construction of the Second Severn crossing but also the vital maintenance costs that keep both bridges open.

The 30 year term has reduced and the Concession Agreement between the Secretary of State for Transport and Severn River Crossing Plc is currently forecast to end in 2016. At this time the bridge will revert to the Highways Agency who by the terms of the Act can levy tolls for a further 5 years to establish a maintenance fund for both Severn crossings. Before the end of such a period the issue of tolls would no doubt be reviewed as to the policy that should then be adopted.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ieuan'.

Ieuan Wyn Jones
Gweinidog dros yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for the Economy and Transport

