

PE1962/F: Stop motorhomes parking overnight out with formal campsites, caravan parks and Aires

Petitioner submission, 18 April 2024

The problem has not gone away, and in fact may get worse. The Highland Council had an Access Ranger programme running for the last few years, **but they are unable to fund it for 2024.**

It highlights that they observed:

- 33,243 motorhomes parked up mostly overnight – not in a campsite or aire
- 126 incidents of motorhome waste on the roadside
- 8,657 incidents of outdoor toileting
- 3,740 scorch marks from campfires
- 2,186 bags of litter were collected

They also dealt with issues with litter and issues surrounding informal camping which is also an issue, but not one addressed in our petition.

We firmly believe that if these 33,243 motorhomes were somehow forced into regulated spaces which had at least facilities for disposing of waste and were monitored regularly in order to prevent misuse, these problems would be reduced significantly.

Robin Pettigrew who also lives in the highlands also produced a report “Combatting overtourism in Scotland”, his report highlights the same problems that we are trying to tackle with this petition. He offers several solutions to try and solve the issues. We are all on the same page – there is a very significant problem here and the government needs to step up and do something about it. His report is available if the Committee wishes to receive a copy.

A recent report from the NC550 the Land Weeps Facebook page found that 73% of respondents think that RVs (motorhomes) should be required to stay on sites.

We also believe that if the tourist tax is applied to campsites and not to the motorhomes staying by the roadside then these numbers will increase significantly. The Scottish Government has already received concerns from various NGOs like the Federation of Small Business and the Scottish Tourism Alliance as well as the Highland Council highlighting this case. A report called Pitching the Value is available which was created in conjunction with all the major caravan and camping organisations. This report highlights the value that campsites have to the Scottish Economy and the jobs that are created, both directly and indirectly through the supply chain.

Here is a quote from the report, **“In 2022/23 it is estimated that the Scottish holiday park and campsite sector generated a gross direct visitor expenditure**

impact of £991m in the economy. This visitor expenditure supports 18,354 FTE jobs and contributes £565m (including multipliers) of GVA to the economy. In addition to the figures above, money spent on maintenance by tourers and holiday caravan owners adds a further £99m of expenditure to the Scottish economy. “

If there are 33,000 motorhomes parking up overnight at the roadside and not staying on campsites there will be a significant detrimental effect on the economy.

As per our petition, we would like to remind you that it costs money to host these 33,000 motorhomes. They need somewhere to dispose of their rubbish (our campsite spends over £20,000 per year on getting our bins collected.) They also need somewhere to fill up with water and dispose of their waste (again our campsite paid over £17,000 last year on water bills). If these costs are not being covered by campsites or aires then the taxpayer will need to pay for it instead. Please also remember that our campsite pays over £21,000 per year in business rates, and another £113,000 to HMRC by way of PAYE, VAT and Corporation Tax. We also employ 2 staff all year round and 5 staff on a seasonal basis. Therefore, the government is losing even more tax revenue by allowing this to continue.