# Nicola Sturgeon faces criticism over delays in A9 road dualling project



Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has faced criticism from campaigners for her explanations regarding the failed promise to dual the A9 road between Perth and Inverness by 2025. Sturgeon appeared before a Holyrood committee on May 29, 2024, to address the delays. She apologized for the Scottish Government’s inability to meet the deadline, citing challenges such as Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic, and the cost of living crisis.

Campaigner Laura Hansler from the A9 Dual Action Group criticized Sturgeon’s explanations as “lame excuses,” stating that the former First Minister should have been more transparent with the public earlier. Sturgeon defended the government’s efforts, indicating that significant hurdles were recognized around 2017-2018 but were only deemed insurmountable by late 2022.

The A9 Dualling project, estimated to cost £3 billion, was announced in 2011 with a 2025 completion target. The completion date has now been pushed back to 2035. In the discussion, Sturgeon emphasized the project’s importance but acknowledged that the government was overly optimistic in finding solutions, which delayed the acknowledgment of the inevitable delays.

David Richardson, Federation of Small Businesses’ Highlands & Islands development manager, underscored the importance of the A9 for regional connectivity, emphasizing that the road is vital for economic stability and community sustenance in the Highlands.