



Media release

2 August, 2022

Government urged to drop biofuels policy

A group of concerned New Zealanders has launched a campaign urging the Government to drop the proposed 'biofuels obligation' set to begin on 1 April 2023.

The 'Don't Burn Our Future' advocacy group says the Government's plan to legally require fuel suppliers to add biofuel to petrol and diesel is at best naïve and at worst 'pure greenwashing.'

Campaign Coordinator Jake Roos says, while the measure may sound like a solution to reducing New Zealand's reliance on fossil fuels, that couldn't be further from the truth.

'Just because something has 'bio' in its name doesn't mean it's green. The proposal will do nothing to benefit the environment. Instead, it is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions and lead to a host of other negative impacts on the planet, as well as further driving up the cost of fuel and food.'

Roos says this is because New Zealand doesn't have enough of the right kind of waste to make the amount of biofuel that would be required to meet the mandate. He says this means we would have to either import or grow food crops to produce biofuel in the quantities needed to meet the mandate.

'The extra demand for food crops to make biofuel drives tropical deforestation and other land conversion that actually increases climate-changing emissions compared to using fossil fuel. It makes no sense as a measure to address the climate crisis.

'What's more, growing food, to feed cars rather than people, destroys natural habitats for irreplaceable species, as well displacing indigenous people and destroying their homes and livelihoods. International environmental organisations such as Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Oxfam campaign against biofuels mandates for these reasons.'

Roos says the group is dismayed that the New Zealand government appears intent on adopting policy that has proven to be a disaster elsewhere.

'Biofuels mandates overseas have resulted in more land being converted to grow crops for fuel, rather than food, and higher food and energy costs are the result.

'The government's own analysis lists all these potentially negative impacts, including how the planned policy would drive up costs for the most vulnerable New Zealanders. It acknowledges we don't have the volumes of waste material to make 'sustainable' biofuels from using presently available technology and details how biofuels made from wood will not be available for many years. It says New Zealand will need to import biofuel made from food crops to meet the required volumes. And yet they are pressing ahead.'

'As a global citizen, Aotearoa New Zealand cannot turn a blind eye to the unacceptable environmental and social costs of producing unsustainable biofuels just because it's not happening within our borders.'

The 'Don't Burn our Future' campaign is being supported by community climate advocacy group Low Carbon Kāpiti. The Group has launched a public petition on the Greenpeace Community website that they intend to deliver to Minister Megan Woods.

Roos says the group wants to make sure that New Zealanders know about the proposed biofuel mandate and its potential consequences.'

'We believe the time and money that is being spent on implementing a biofuels mandate would be better spent on climate solutions that are actually proven to work and have a positive impact now, such as wind and solar power, more active personal and public transport, electric vehicles, investment in rail and conservation measures.'

For further evidence see the links in the following web articles:

David Keat's Blog: <https://www.greaterauckland.org.nz/2022/07/11/biofuels-in-new-zealand-a-solution-or-a-problem/>

Jake Roos's Blog: <https://lowcarbonkapiti.org.nz/wishing-for-fairy-dust-why-the-nz-biofuels-obligation-is-the-worst-kind-of-magical-thinking/>

FAQ:

<https://lowcarbonkapiti.org.nz/frequently-asked-questions-on-the-nz-biofuels-obligation/>

For more information, contact Jake Roos jake.roos@gmail.com 022 6871980

Website:<https://lowcarbonkapiti.org.nz/dont-burn-our-future-stop-the-nz-biofuels-obligation/>

Petition: <https://community.greenpeace.org.nz/petitions/don-t-burn-our-future-stop-the-nz-biofuels-obligation>