



Press Release
The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc
PO Box 11 152
Wellington
31 July 2008

**Engineers for Social Responsibility
and
The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc**

**Statement from a Joint One-day Conference on
“Responding to Oil Depletion and Climate Change”**

1. This conference is concerned at the potential for serious and long-term disruption of the New Zealand economy and society from rising oil prices and climate change.
2. The conference accepts that the potential threat of climate change is now widely recognised and many people are being increasingly motivated to take action to mitigate its effects, though effective action by governments is slow. However the future threat to our way of life posed by depleting oil supplies and rising prices is still barely recognised and acknowledged by officialdom and most political parties in New Zealand.
3. The need to take action to prepare for future oil shortages and much higher prices is now urgent, as this will have a major and ongoing impact on our country over the coming decade and beyond. In contrast, early climate change impacts on New Zealand (though not necessarily elsewhere) are likely to be less serious.
4. The conference accepts, on the basis of international oil industry evidence available and provided at this conference, the seriousness of oil supply, price and security issues, and the likelihood of oil scarcity within the coming decade, as well as the need to reduce climate change gas emissions from transport.
5. The conference is aware of a number of ways in which the solutions to make our communities more resilient to diminishing oil supplies and rising prices already exist, and we encourage the Government to support these measures.
6. The conference believes that there is a need to investigate and facilitate the scope for autonomous action by communities, and local government and regional authorities, to develop longer-term solutions for these issues. This could be a priority task for the new government elected at the end of this year

and assisted through a participatory exercise by a commission with full authority to conduct its own inquiries.

7. In the run-up to the general election, the conference calls on all political parties in New Zealand to explicitly outline how they will proactively govern to take full account of future oil depletion and climate change issues, focusing on the following:
 - Volatile and rising oil prices, and future oil supply, security and price issues,
 - The impact that these will have on the New Zealand economy and society,
 - The actions needed now to help safeguard the future of New Zealand economy and society,
 - How such actions will support reductions in New Zealand's climate change gas emissions from transport,
 - Supporting the transition of New Zealand's towns and cities, and rural communities and farms, to a new sustainable future through empowering and supporting local community action.

ENDS

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