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Press Release - Sustainable Energy Forum

Transport energy growth predictions startling

Ministry of Economic Development (MED) projections for transport energy use are a "wake-up call" says John Blakeley, Convenor of the Sustainable Energy Forum. "New Zealand's transport energy use is already very high, and the MED's projected 1.3% annual growth ignores the golden rule -- if you are in a hole, stop digging."

The MED Reference Scenario, released in the latest Energy outlook report (see http://www.med.govt.nz/ers/en_stats/outlook/index.html), suggests that transport use will increase by another third by 2025.

"We need a radical rethink about the way people and goods are moved, and whether we need that extra transport. If the trend in transport fuel demand is to be reversed, a suite of policies needs to evolve soon to create change. London, for example, has shown that even a primitive road pricing approach can have a big effect on congestion and bring major economic gains to businesses. Such measures in Auckland would be far cheaper than building more motorways, and more effective. New Zealand will be left further behind if we persist with failed last-century policies." said Mr Blakeley.

"To reverse the trend in increasing transport energy demand on imported fuels, New Zealand also needs to move significantly away from importing large new and used motor vehicles for personal use (such as sports utility vehicles and four wheel drive vehicles) towards importing much smaller, lighter and more fuel-efficient vehicles, including hybrid-electric vehicles, and also to implement programmes to promote the greater use of alternative fuels, including blending such fuels with petrol and diesel" Mr Blakeley said.

"Hopefully these changes can be achieved voluntarily but if not, for environmental and economic reasons, and perhaps availability of sufficient supply, the imperative of restricting growth in energy consumption could mean that strong incentives or even a degree of compulsion may have to be applied."

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