



The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc.

Press Release
Sustainable Energy Forum
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Oil Alternatives: Urgent Action Needed

"Government must stop delaying action on support for alternatives to imported fuel," said Tim Jones, transport spokesperson for The Sustainable Energy Forum Inc. (SEF).

"With oil prices continuing to rise, and future supplies uncertain, the lack of will by Government Ministers and officials to get on with implementing policies designed to lessen New Zealand's dependence on oil is deplorable," Tim Jones said.

"The Government has some good policy ideas on transport. But a combination of bureaucratic inertia, industry resistance and the desire not to offend coalition partners means that everything is taking far too long."

"It's good that many New Zealanders are buying smaller, more fuel-efficient cars," Tim Jones said, "but the Government could lend a helping hand by introducing a 'feebate' system for energy efficient vehicles, making it more expensive to import and register inefficient cars and correspondingly cheaper to import and register efficient ones. We should also implement mandatory vehicle fuel economy labeling and impose challenging minimum efficiency standards. Steps like this are 'quick wins' that we should be doing now."

"A mechanism to encourage biofuel blends is needed now. It does not need to be compulsory – let the consumers choose. Government's role is to set compulsory alternative fuel targets, and realistic penalties, and then let the fuel companies and other innovators get on with it. Given the Government's stated commitment to biofuels, the prospect that they won't be generally available until at least 2008 is inexcusable."

"Demand for public transport is growing, and existing capacity is struggling to cope, but we continue to pour money into new roads ahead of making a major investments in public transport. With oil prices forecast to rise strongly in the next few years, and oil supplies on a knife edge, it is clear we do not have our priorities right."

"SEF hopes the Government's proposed National Energy Strategy will address such issues. Since it was announced in the Speech from the Throne last December, not even the terms of reference for the development of the strategy have been released. We urge the Government to get its National Energy Strategy plans in front of the public, but get on with the quick wins in the meantime."

"It's time for the Government to act. There's no excuse for more foot-dragging," Tim Jones concluded.

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