

**Angry reaction promised if Government fails to drop biofuels targets :
Demonstration against the RTFO on April 15th**

Press Release

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Biofuelwatch and Campaign against Climate Change

Campaigners vowed to take to the streets in hundreds if the government refuses to drop its plans to massively increase the use of biofuels in the UK, despite mounting and now quite overwhelming scientific evidence that far from helping in the struggle to control climate change biofuels have precisely the reverse effect.

Specifically campaigners are furious that the government is not dropping the RTFO or "Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation" which will mandate 2.5% biofuels at British fuel pumps from April 15th, and thereby hugely increase UK consumption of biofuels. They have vowed to take their protest to Downing Street on April 15th (1), if the RTFO is not suspended.

Yesterday, the UK Department for Transport was forced to announce a review into the indirect impacts of biofuel production (2), following two key scientific papers (3) in early February showing that converting rainforests, peatlands, savannas, or grasslands for biofuel production generates a massive emission of carbon dioxide (4). Yet the government has failed to suspend the RTFO while this review takes place.

Andrew Boswell, co-Director of biofuelwatch, said 'A growing evidence base shows that biofuels damage the planet and people. This latest research has inevitably caused panic for EU (5) and UK officials as it shows their current biofuel policy is fatally flawed. But, calling for a review is a totally inadequate response given this policy is causing human suffering and climate damage right now. Ruth Kelly's only credible response is to immediately respond to the many calls for a moratorium on EU/UK biofuel targets.' (6)

Phil Thornhill of Campaign against Climate Change says 'If the Government carries on with biofuel targets after this latest evidence, we will bring our protests to Gordon Brown at Downing Street on April 15th. He must also act at the EU level to prevent further climate dangerous biofuel production. Brown must tell UK ministers, Hilary Benn and Ruth Kelly, to block the EU Biofuel and Fuel Quality Directives at the upcoming EU ministers meeting on March 15th.' (7, 8)

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Notes for editors:

1. The demonstration is scheduled for Tuesday 15th April, 6.00pm, outside Downing Street. There will be an earlier photo-opportunity at 1.00pm. Speakers to be announced.

2. <http://tinyurl.com/2lp9zq>, Department for Transport Press Release : 'Kelly announces review of indirect impacts of biofuel production'

3. This research is the final nail in the coffin for EU and UK biofuel policy and follows other recent reports showing:

* production for biofuels from Palm Oil is resulting in wide spread human rights abuses in Indonesia (4). See <http://tinyurl.com/ystukr>, Friends of the Earth, February 11 2008, EU fuelling human rights disaster in Indonesia.

* Biofuels are causing a human rights and humanitarian disaster. They are pushing up the price of food, and displacing of large numbers of small farmers, indigenous peoples and other communities in the global South. (see multiple reports at : <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/background.php>)

* oilseed rape biodiesel can produce up to 70% more greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions than fossil fuel diesel due to high nitrous oxide emissions from nitrate fertilisers. Oilseed rape comprises 80% of EU home-grown Biodiesel (5). See . [http:// <http://tinyurl.com/2elcyc](http://tinyurl.com/2elcyc) tinyurl.com/2elcyc, September 2007 'Biofuels could increase global warming with laughing gas, says Nobel prize-winning chemist

4. This equates to a 'biofuel carbon debt' of up to 840 years . See > <http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/1151861v1>, Searchinger et al, Science, February 7, 2008, 'Use of U.S. Croplands for Biofuels Increases Greenhouse Gases Through Emissions from Land Use Change' and

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/abstract/1152747v1>, Fargione et al, Science, February 7, 2008, 'Land Clearing and the Biofuel Carbon Debt'

5. Campaigners are concerned that while not only the UK Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO), but also the EU Biofuel and EU Fuel Quality Directives remain as policy objectives, worldwide expansion of the biofuel industry will continue to surge - creating damage now and into the future. The EU Biofuel Directive seeks to mandate 10% biofuels at the pump by 2020, whilst the Fuel Quality Directive may force even higher levels up to 28%.

6. For a list of moratorium calls and other background information, see <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/> and <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/declarations.php>

7. Campaigners are calling for not only that the UK RTFO, that mandates 2.5% biofuels at British fuel pumps from April 15th, be immediately suspended but also that ministers, Hilary Benn and Ruth Kelly block and stop EU policies that would create a surge in climate dangerous biofuel production at the upcoming EU ministers meetings.

8. There was a week of action against Agrofuels in the UK in late January 2008 with protests at over 15 locations. For photos and descriptions, see: <http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk/actionsjan08cov.php>