



Orang-utans – habitat threatened

NO RAINFOREST DESTRUCTION FOR BIOFUELS



Oil palm plantation & fires, Indonesia

'In the absence of governmental constraints, the rising price of oil could quickly become the leading threat to biodiversity, ensuring that the wave of extinctions now under way does indeed become the sixth great extinction.'

(Lester Brown, President of the Earth Policy Institute)

The European Biofuel Directive is creating a massive unregulated market in biofuels. It demands that, by 2010, 5.75% of all motor fuel must come from biofuels – no matter how they are produced. As a result;

- Malaysia and Indonesia have earmarked millions of hectares of tropical rainforest for destruction – to grow more palm oil for biodiesel sold in Europe.
- Soya is the main destroyer of the Amazon, and Brazil hopes to become a global exporter of soya-biodiesel.
- The UK's first large-scale biodiesel refinery has just opened in Middlesbrough, and is set to buy palm oil and soya directly linked to deforestation in the Amazon and on Borneo.

Rainforest destruction is helping to destabilise the world's climate. There are biofuels which are truly sustainable and climate-friendly. Palm oil or soya from rainforest land are not!

... AND NOW FOR THE GOOD NEWS

The European Commission are reviewing the Biofuel Directive this year. Elsewhere in Europe, NGOs are campaigning to protect rainforests from being felled to grow fuel for our cars.

With enough public pressure, we can get the safeguards we need.

GET INVOLVED

Write to your MEP and ask him or her to support a full review of the European Biofuel Directive. There needs to be a moratorium on the Directive and its targets, and a ban on imports of all biofuels which are grown at the expense of rainforests, or other natural ecosystems, which contribute to more greenhouse gas emissions than they save, or which impact on food supplies.

Join our email alert group for future campaign actions via:

www.biofuelwatch.org.uk

BACKGROUND

Can biofuels be part of the solution to climate change?

Gaining energy from agricultural and organic waste cuts down on greenhouse gas emissions and is good for the planet. At present, however, we could only meet a very small part of our energy needs that way. One day, biodiesel from algae might offer a truly climate-friendly fuel, but research is still in the early stages.

Growing energy-crops in Europe can give us biofuels which are linked to slightly lower greenhouse gas emissions than petrol or diesel. However, an enormous amount of land is needed to replace very few fossil fuels: Using 5.6 million hectares of current set-asides for biofuel crops could reduce Europe's CO₂ emissions by 0.3%. Such conversion might, however, lead to catastrophic losses of birds, insects and amphibians.

Tropical deforestation already accounts for a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions - that's the same as five Kyoto agreements! More deforestation is catastrophic for the climate.

Why are rainforests being destroyed for biofuels?

Biofuel crops grown in the tropics achieve higher energy yields per hectare than those grown in Europe. Rainforests can be seen as the world's agricultural frontier: 40% of the planet is already used for agriculture – including most of the arable land. A large biofuel market necessitates either massive agricultural expansion or intensification, and both will have dramatic consequences for remaining forests, ecosystems, soils, water and biodiversity.

What about food supplies?

Global grain supplies have been declining over the past two years, and global food reserves are at the lowest level in 25 years. Some experts fear that we are dangerously close to global food shortages, and burning more and more food crops in cars could make the situation worse. Already, food prices are rising and poor people across the world are beginning to suffer.

What is the solution?

There needs to be a thorough review of the European Biofuel Directive – and a moratorium on the Directive and its targets meantime. Europe must impose import bans on those biofuels linked to rainforest destruction, or to the destruction of other natural ecosystems – and act to protect food supplies from a growing demand for biofuels.

Growing transport emissions must be addressed by reducing traffic and setting high mandatory fuel-efficiency standards for cars.



Oilseed rape for biodiesel



Forest fires, Indonesia



Amazon deforestation and soya

