

[Read today's paper](#)

[Sign in](#) | [Register](#)

Go to:

The Observer Politics

Home	UK news	International	Politics	Business	Comment	Leaders	Focus	Sport
Review	Magazine	Screen	Travel	Cash	Letters	Food	Music	



Blair pushes for 'eco-friendly' petrol and cleaner, greener cars

Gaby Hinsliff, political editor
Sunday October 30, 2005
[The Observer](#)

It smells of popcorn, can be made from chip fat, and may just help save the planet. Every motorist in Britain will shortly be filling their tanks with eco-friendly petrol under government plans to tackle climate change.

The nation's cars will switch to using a mix of ordinary diesel or petrol with 'biofuel', a cleaner alternative made from plant oils, by 2010, in an attempt to reduce harmful emissions from traffic.

The move - which comes amid new concern over the speed of climate change, following a month of hurricanes and an unusually balmy October in Britain - suggests the government has accepted it cannot force motorists out of their cars, and opted to clean them up instead.

Writing in The Observer today ahead of a major international summit on climate change to be held in London, Tony Blair warns that 'vicious climate disasters' such as floods and hurricanes have intensified the case for action. But he adds: 'None of this is going to happen unless the developed and emerging nations sit down together and work it out, in a way that allows us all to grow [and] imposes no competitive disadvantage.'

Cars will not need to be modified to cope with biofuel, and although it is costlier to produce, officials insist the price of petrol will not rise since the biofuel will represent only five per cent of the mix. However that small change is enough to reduce Britain's emissions of carbon dioxide, the 'greenhouse gas' implicated in global warming, by more than 1 per cent by 2010 according to government calculations.

The move follows warnings from Prince Charles that climate change is now the greatest threat facing humanity. Blair admitted last year that on current trends, Britain would miss its target to reduce greenhouse gases by 20 per cent by 2010 - prompting a

Advertisement

Tools

- [Text-only version](#) ▶
- [Send it to a friend](#) ▶
- [Save story](#) ▶

The Observer

- [Front page](#) ▶
- [Story index](#) ▶

Recent articles

[Fight against yobs to target children](#)

['Stop spending' memo reveals NHS cash crisis](#)

[Cameron bounces Tories into poll lead](#)

[Refugees in 'cruel limbo'](#)

[3.6m people in Britain are gay - official](#)

[Out of the cold, on to the web](#)

[Police force mergers will cost millions](#)

[The lawyer, the mother, the cook and the desperate housewife](#)

[Cameron to drive 'caring' Tory agenda](#)

[Brown to unveil rules to ease house prices](#)

[Britain 'could bury greenhouse gases'](#)

[Labour MSPs block tax on plastic bags](#)

[Rice rejects EU protests over secret terror prisons](#)

[Brown fights on over farm subsidies](#)

[Burglars face drug tests in new ruling](#)

The Guardian

[Front page](#)

[Story index](#)



shakeup of climate change policies to plug the gap.

The review will be published shortly by Margaret Beckett, the Environment Secretary, and the biofuels move is being actively considered for inclusion.

However, more controversial measures are being debated. Although building more nuclear power stations - which produce fewer emissions - is unlikely to help meet the 2010 target because they would not be ready in time, Blair argues that 'wind, solar and - yes - nuclear' power have roles to play.

Green groups are also alarmed about the search for a successor agreement to the Kyoto accord once it expires in 2012, fearing it will be weakened to encourage the US to sign. However, Blair signals today he will push for it to be legally enforceable, adding the world needs a 'sound, rational, science-based unity, which ensures the right legally-binding framework to incentivise sustainable development.'

- ▶ Biodiesel is usually made from 'oily' crops such as sunflower or palm fruits, but can be made from used cooking oil thrown away by restaurants. Aficionados say cars running on it emit smells of fresh popcorn rather than stale chip shop. Under the plan, suppliers would be legally obliged to ensure five per cent of sales comprise biofuels.

A spokesman for Friends of the Earth welcomed the decision but warned it could not substitute for long-term behaviour changes. 'Biofuels are potentially a useful way of cutting carbon dioxide emissions, but the honest truth is the best way to cut emissions from transport would be to try and get people out of their cars,' he said.

A poll published today by the Stockholm-Network found three quarters of Britons thought climate change should not be prioritised over economic prosperity, suggesting there are limits to what the public would tolerate.

Special reports

[Special report: climate change](#)

[Special report: G8](#)

Useful links

[IPCC](#)

[UN framework convention on climate change](#)

Advertisement



[Privacy policy](#) | [Terms & conditions](#) | [Advertising guide](#) | [A-Z index](#) | [About this site](#)

Guardian Unlimited © Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005