

To: Sir Peter Soulsby, M.P.

Dear Sir Peter,

Having already used up much of the world's oil and set in motion major changes in our planet's climate, in the process, governments and business are now turning to so called bio-fuels, as an alternative. They present these fuels, produced from plants, as being much better for the environment than oil based fuels, but they are not.

In Borneo, where I come from, humans had already destroyed much of the forest where I live, now even more is being destroyed, to produce bio-fuels. As a result of this a recent UN report predicted that my species, your cousins, may be driven to extinction in as little as five years. The same will happen to many other species, all over the world, as the rate at which their habitat is being destroyed also accelerates and all this destruction will only make climate change worse, because of the massive amounts of CO2 released when forests are destroyed.

It is not just other species you are hurting either. Apart from making climate change worse, which hurts us all, big companies are also driving poor people of your own species from their homes and farms, to convert the land to growing bio-fuel crops. In addition, more and more land is being diverted from food production, threatening millions with starvation.

This push to replace fossil fuels with fuels produced from crops is only just taking off, but if allowed to continue it will ensure the disappearance of my species and many others; and it will only make things far worse for yours. There is simply not enough land to grow both the food you need and all the fuel you demand, even if you destroy all the forests.

There are ways that you could reduce your species' demand for fuel, meet the remaining demand in less destructive ways and provide a decent life for all your people. Trying to maintain "business as usual", by appropriating more and more land to grow bio-fuel crops is unnecessary and a dead end (literally for some of us).

The boom in demand for bio-fuels is being driven by targets introduced by governments, such as the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation in the UK. This will require all vehicle fuel to include a proportion of bio-fuel, with the proportion increasing each year. I know that the DEFRA select committee, on which you sit, has already expressed a lot of concerns about bio-fuels and I would urge you not to support any further increase in the RTFO and to seek the withdrawal of requirements already agreed, until it is possible to ensure that any targets can be met from truly sustainable sources, such as with fuels produced from waste. I would also urge you to push the UK government to seek withdrawal of EU targets and to ban all fuels produced from crops grown specifically to produce fuel.

Yours Sincerely

Abigail the orang-utan