

Short film highlights environmental damage caused by biofuels

Title

To watch the 1m 30 second film in English, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igUtLwruUjA> Subtitles available in English, Hungarian, Italian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak (more coming online soon here <http://www.youtube.com/user/stopbadbiofuels>) More than 20 environmental organisations across Europe are calling on the EU to stop the environmental damage caused by EU biofuels targets with the help of Peter and Jane, characters in a specially-created animated short film. The film, distributed on social networks including YouTube and Facebook, highlights the problem of so-called indirect land use change (ILUC). ILUC is happening as a direct result of a legally binding EU target for 10% of transport fuel to come from renewable fuels (mostly biofuel) by 2020. As fields of food crops are switched to grow biofuels for our cars, somebody somewhere goes hungry unless those missing tonnes of food are grown elsewhere. This expansion of global agricultural land comes at the expense of forests and wildlife. The crops that make-up the shortfall could come from anywhere, but economics dictate it will likely be in tropical regions, encouraging farmers to cut down rainforests, or drain ancient peatlands - both resulting in a massive release of greenhouse gas emissions. For most current biofuels, the effect is to wipeout any benefits for climate change - making them worse even than fossil fuels. A recent study by the independent Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP) found that the use of biofuels in EU transport will emit between 81% and 167% more greenhouse gases than fossil fuels in 2020 and the knock-on effects of growing these biofuels will mean converting an area twice the size of Belgium of forests, grasslands and peatlands into new crop fields. The findings were based on EU member states' own plans for increasing use of biofuels and the most recent science. **In the short film, Peter is persuaded by his friend Jane to stop growing his favourite food crop (potatoes) in his garden in order to grow sunflowers that can be turned into biofuel. Forced to go to the supermarket to buy his potatoes, Peter realises that a farmer needs more land to grow the extra food and learns that this new demand for food crops is met by clearing rainforests and other precious natural environment and the biodiversity which goes with it.** Environmental organisations are calling on the EU to bring forward a legal proposal to account for the ILUC problem by only allowing biofuels that are better overall than fossil fuels, when ILUC is fully accounted for. The European Commission is expected to propose how it intends to deal with ILUC by July.
