

SUBMISSION ON: BIOFUEL BILL DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERATION OF MOTORING CLUBS (FOMC)

We haven't had time to study your proposal document in detail but we ask you to consider the following comments.

It is admirable that New Zealand is among the pioneers in developing and encouraging the use of biofuels, however in years to come it may prove to be more harmful to the environment than our wholesale use of fossil fuels over the last century. If carbon sinks in the form of rain forests are destroyed to grow crops simply to produce biofuels any benefits will be cancelled out. This has already started to take place. There is also the very real possibility of price increases for and shortages of food crops.

We understand it is proposed to increase the excise duty on fossil fuels to 4.5%. We are told this will amount to about 5c a litre on motor spirit. It is hard to see how this increase will encourage the general public to embrace the biofuel concept.

You suggest biofuel will have no detrimental affect on modern vehicles. We recall the introduction of unleaded fuel and the doom and gloom brigade suggesting that would be the end of historic collector's vehicles. This has not eventuated. By fitting hardened valve seats or using an additive we have been able to continue to enjoy using and displaying our heritage vehicles.

You suggest there may be problems with older and poorly maintained vehicles. We have no sympathy for owners of poorly maintained vehicles. These vehicles shouldn't be on the road in the first place, but your comment suggests and implies that all older vehicles are poorly maintained. On the contrary heritage collector's vehicles receive better maintenance than most modern vehicles, are worth more to their owners and often fetch much higher prices than new cars.

It is imperative that mineral fuels remain available for the vehicles. In 1929 when leaded petrol came on the market octane rating went from about 66 octane to 71 octane and in the 1960's high octane fuel was 86 octane. Standard was 83 octane. Compression ratios in 1930 were about 4.5:1. By 1960 6:1 was a high compression. Our present low octane fuel is too high for a side valve motor to run efficiently on, even with as much planed off the head as possible. For this reason we believe both high and low octane fossil fuels must remain available, at least until it is known that there are no long term harmful effects from biofuels.

Some years ago there was a shipment of petrol with a high solvent property. It caused fuel pumps and fuel line failure and caused a number of dangerous fuel leaks and fires. If the solvent properties of biofuel were to cause a similar problem it would be of great concern to owners of heritage collector's vehicles. Many of these vehicles have fuel tanks lined with a plastic coating called Petseal, if it were to soften and part company with the tank surface new fuel tanks would be required.

Yours sincerely,

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