

## Bioenergy Association says forestry slash could help drive our heavy transport

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Photo: Bridget Parker supplied to RNZ

The Bioenergy Association says the forestry slash causing havoc on the East Coast could have been slashing the country's carbon emissions.

Bioenergy executive officer Brian Cox says the slash washing down Tairāwhiti's swollen rivers could have been part of the feedstock to create fuel to drive the country's hard to abate sectors such as heavy transport and aviation.

"It wouldn't be the cheapest fuel but look at the cost of not tackling these issues.

"The government has consistently looked for greenhouse gas emission reductions with the wrong lens," Cox says.

"Government looks to what emissions reduction solutions we already have, rather than asking the question - what reduction solutions could we have?"

The government's recent decision to drop the Sustainable Biofuels Obligation Bill is just the latest in a long line of decisions that shy away from the government taking the lead.

It should have taken a proactive approach like it has with the Lake Onslow battery project and had a team looking at the potential of bioenergy to tackle the country's sustainable energy challenges, he says.

"We should be looking at the opportunities for creating opportunities from wise land use by asking: What greenhouse gas emission reductions could we do?"

He says foresters are making attempts to deal with the slash issue but in the end it will require a financial incentive and biofuel could provide that.

## Bioenergy in the news

The slash could be used to produce transport biofuels or new types of wood fuel to replace coal used by large energy users such as Huntley power station, Fonterra or steel and concrete manufacturing.

But for that to happen the government has to take the lead. “We could do this if we were serious about assisting the East Cape,” Cox says.

“Similarly we should be looking at our organic wastes going to landfill and investigating how they can be recycled into renewable gaseous biofuel to replace natural gas.”

“We have large areas of land which are not highly productively used, and often erode when storms arrive. Much of this steep or low productive land would be better managed, and produce increased value.

“If government is serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions from heavy transport and getting better value from the East Cape forestry then we need a collective task force supported by government focused on creating sustainable business from East Cape Forestry.”

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