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[Home](#) > Rodney Hide: Trading scheme is a scam

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By Rodney Hide

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Lucy Lawless should stop protesting.

Former Prime Minister **Helen Clark** declares me a denier, actor **Lucy Lawless** says I'm whacko and political columnist **Chris Trotter** wants to charge me with treason.

Phew. All because I say out loud what most Kiwis think: New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) is a scam and a waste. The ETS taxes our elderly trying to heat their homes and then uses the revenue to subsidise multi-national Japanese companies. These companies bought forests in New Zealand. Their trees are now subsidised because they suck up CO₂.

And the reason for the money-go-round? To cool the planet. Even ETS architects say it won't make a difference. So it's a scam. And a waste.

I know I shouldn't say it. I will now suffer worthy souls lecturing me until they're blue in the face and I'm again bored rigid. You know the drill. The science is settled. Yada yada. Some extraordinary number of scientists have reached consensus. Blah, blah.

It all moves me not a jot. Science is not religion. It's not politics. Science is never settled and truth isn't decided by voting.

Besides, I've already survived innumerable environmental scares. We didn't run out of oil as was scientifically predicted when I was at school.

Nor did we suffer the catastrophic ecological collapse that was the consensus. The ozone hole has gone the way of the Y2K bug. The population bomb never went off. We haven't run out of food. And acid rain never killed the forests.

Back in the 1970s the earth was cooling. The frightener then was the impending ice age. I kid you not. It was front cover of Time magazine. The Earth then warmed. The frightener flipped to global warming. Then the Earth cooled. The scaremongers learned the lesson. They hedge their bets now, declaring the scare "climate change". These flip-flops all happened in my lifetime. It's hard to take the scares seriously.

But the boy who cried "wolf" wasn't always wrong so it's possible, just possible, that this time the scaremongers are right. So it's worth a look.

Yes, CO₂ is a greenhouse gas and causes warming. Yes, burning fossil fuels produces CO₂ and the concentration of CO₂ in the air has increased. And yes, the Earth is warmer now than it was 100 years ago. The science shows that doubling CO₂ in the atmosphere would increase the Earth's temperature by a little over one degree.

It's warmer now than it was but the present temperature is nothing out of the ordinary. It's been warmer. And the present rate of temperature change is, again, nothing alarming. The Earth has seen it all before.

It's all about what happens next. That's where the leap occurs from science to computer models. The predicted rise in CO₂ on its own doesn't produce a rise in temperature that is at all worrying. Its effect must be multiplied within the models.

The chief greenhouse gas is not CO₂, but water vapour. The models are programmed so increasing CO₂ warms the earth, producing more water vapour which, in turn, warms the earth even more. It's that multiplying effect through increased water vapour that causes the "climate change" scare, not the CO₂ increase on its own.

The multiplication through water vapour is found only in the models. It's not seen in nature. That's despite spending billions of dollars looking. Indeed, it's quite possible that water vapour has the opposite effect and dampens CO₂'s warming effect.

It's only the computer models that produce the scary future. And that's precisely the result they programmed to produce. The models aren't science and the science shows there's nothing to be alarmed about. The scare is not from the real world. It's a computer program, programmed to scare.

Nonetheless, we're stuck with an ineffectual ETS money-go-round that no one likes and everyone agrees won't work. CO₂ is plant food. It's not a pollutant. It's absurd that we are supposed to be trading it. As Richard Treadgold at the blog Climate Conversation Group says: "Carbon trading means selling a product you don't have and can't deliver to a buyer who doesn't want it."

I'm happy for Eco-Warrior Lucy Lawless to ditch her purple Mercedes, downsize her LA house, and swap electricity for solar panels to heat her swimming pool. Good for her. I am sure the planet heaved a sigh of relief.

But please, Lucy, lay off encouraging the Government to take ever more punishing action that makes it harder for the rest of us to heat our homes, get to work, and have work to go to.

We want to look after our kids too. For ordinary people it's a job and a warm home that's at stake. Not a downsized LA pad and switching the pool to solar.

By Rodney Hide

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