



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 11, 2021

Climate Scientist Suggests Carbon Emissions Should Be Taxed at \$1,000/Ton

A longtime New Zealand climate scientist is frustrated that mankind has not yet broken the bank and ponied up to solve the so-called climate crisis. According to Dave Lowe, author of the new book *The Alarmist*, even climate-friendly governments such as New Zealand don't understand the real cost of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

In an excerpt from his book, published in *The Guardian*, Lowe explains, "If you ask a chemist how, and how much it would cost, to remove a tonne of CO₂ from the atmosphere, they would probably throw up their hands in horror, come up with a figure of NZ\$1,000 (\$725 U.S.) per tonne and a very complex apparatus."



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New Zealand, a very progressive nation when it comes to climate change, is currently charging NZ\$37 per tonne in its Emission Trading Scheme — a figure Lowe calls "ridiculously cheap."

To Lowe, that's small potatoes when you compare the costs with the so-called effects of climate change.

"A climate scientist would reply to the question with another, like, 'How much do you think the 2020 wildfires in Australia, California, Colorado, Siberia and the Arctic cost?'"

A climate scientist such as Lowe should understand that wildfires are a natural occurrence and are, in fact, [down globally](#) at least 20 percent from 1900. Beyond that, he should understand that many of the fires in Australia and America were started by [humans](#) — not simply by natural occurrences and certainly not by climate change itself.

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Lowe also believes we already possess the tools to fix climate change, but we just lack the political will and leadership on a planetary scale to do so.

"We've been blinkered into thinking that there are no alternatives to fossil fuels for running an economy and society. But engineers and economists can point to several alternatives, and we need to adopt the ones that provide a sustainable future in this decade."

But what exactly are these miracle alternatives that Lowe insists are already here? Surely he can't mean wind and solar power, which have already proven their [unreliability](#) in producing power unless conditions are ideal; i.e. windy and sunny.

Lowe does cite "Green Hydrogen," an interesting fuel that creates hydrogen using renewable energy rather than fossil fuels. Experts claim that the resulting product will be a fuel less costly than natural gas in the long run that can be used to power pretty much everything, with water its only byproduct.



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Long term, green hydrogen may be the clean fuel that everybody wants. But the “less costly” claim is under some suspicion — at least in the short term.

According to Ben Gallagher, a senior analyst at energy consulting firm Wood Mackenzie, “It’s just not economical, and it won’t be.”

There are many challenges to converting green hydrogen for use in automobiles, for example. “On the mobility side, you not only have the electrolyzer, you have a large distribution network that you need to build out,” Gallagher explained. “Compared to [electric vehicles] or gasoline, I don’t understand how it’s going to be cost-competitive in any way, anytime soon.”

Even the folks at the International Renewable Energy Agency (Irena) agree that Green Hydrogen is not “panacea.”

“A hydrogen-based energy transition will not happen overnight,” a report from Irena states. “Hydrogen will likely trail other strategies such as electrification of end-use sectors, and its use will target specific applications. The need for a dedicated new supply infrastructure may limit hydrogen use.”

So, cheap green hydrogen may be on the distant horizon, but like wind and solar power, it’s not there yet. Meanwhile, we’ve got a society to power. We have to get goods to consumers in ways that are efficient and cost-effective.

In the past, Lowe worked for the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and his rhetoric certainly sounds like it.

“To keep global temperature rise within a range that averts the worst climate impacts, IPCC and other climate modeling shows transport emissions must decline. Transitioning to zero emission transport is crucial. Solutions include clean fuels, improved vehicle efficiency, changes to how we move people and goods, and building sustainable cities.”

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