



Home **News** Sport Business Travel Jobs Motoring Property

SEARCH

Go Our site Web

News home  
Law reports  
Obituaries  
Picture galleries

Announcements  
Arts  
Blogs  
Comment  
Crossword  
Dating  
Digital Life  
Earth  
Expat  
Family  
Fantasy Games  
Fashion  
Features  
Food & Drink  
Football  
Gardening  
Health  
Horoscopes  
My Telegraph  
Obituaries  
Promotions  
Science  
Sudoku  
Telegraph e-paper

## Energy ration cards for everyone planned

By Charles Clover, Environment Editor

Last Updated: 12:18am BST 03/07/2005

Every individual in Britain could be issued with a "personal carbon allowance" - a form of energy rationing - within a decade, under proposals being considered seriously by the Government.

Ministers say that increasingly clear evidence that climate change is happening more quickly than expected has made it necessary to "think the unthinkable".

They believe they need to start a public debate on energy rationing now if Tony Blair's aspiration of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by two thirds by 2050 is to be achieved.

Under the scheme for "domestic tradeable quotas" (DTQs), or personal carbon allowances, presented to the Treasury this week, everyone - from the Queen to the poorest people living on state benefits - would have the same annual carbon allocation.

This would be contained electronically on a "ration card", which could be the proposed ID card or a "carbon card" based on supermarket loyalty cards.

It would have to be handed over every time a form of non-renewable energy was purchased - at the filling station, or when buying tickets for a flight - for points to be deducted.

advertisement High users of energy would have to purchase points from low users, or from a central "carbon bank", if they wanted to use more energy.

The scheme applies the principle of carbon trading already accepted for industry.

The implications of domestic carbon trading have been studied for two years by the Tyndall centre for climate change research, which says the scheme is "feasible, affordable and fair".



Elliot Morley: 'We should have an open mind'

### MOST VIEWED



### HOUR BY HOUR

► Fears of dollar collapse as Saudis take fright

Telegraph magazine  
Telegraph offers  
Telegraph PM  
Weather  
Your Money  
Your view

NEWS SERVICES

Blackberry service  
Desktop alerts  
Email services  
Home delivery  
Mobile  
Photographs  
Podcasts  
RSS feeds  
Weekly Telegraph

FEATURE FOCUS

The virtues of the scheme, according to Mr Blair's "green" advisers, the Sustainable Development Commission, are that it would provide a "virtually guaranteed" way of reducing fossil fuel emissions by 60 per cent by 2050.

That is the amount scientists say is necessary to avoid "unacceptable" climate change, such as the switching-off of the Gulf Stream, the melting of the Greenland glaciers and the die-back of the Amazon rain forest.

Domestic tradeable quotas have many advantages over carbon taxes, not least that they are independent from political control, the commission says.

It has recommended that the Government "formally consider" domestic tradeable quotas, "within two years".

In an interview with The Daily Telegraph, Elliot Morley, the minister for the environment and climate change, said the Government was committed to a review of its policies by the end of the year.

"We should have an open mind about the kind of levers that we apply and not be afraid to think the unthinkable," he said. "It is fair to say that for a lot of people personal carbon allowances falls into the unthinkable category.

"I don't think we should dismiss these approaches.

"There might be a decade of debate in it before we get anywhere with it, but my job is to consider quite radical new approaches."

The problems were the cost and making it work as a system that prevented cheating.

Kevin Anderson, of the Tyndall Centre, said: "Once you have accepted that we need a reduction of 60 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 - which it seems now that all parties have - you need to start soon.

"We saw what the public thought of carbon taxes in the protests over the fuel tax escalator. The beauty of personal carbon allowances is that you only need to make about a 1.25 per cent reduction in carbon emissions every year.

"This is a way that enables us to make the necessary annual changes without radical adjustments to our lives.

"It is about making the small changes year by year. It won't stop us going on holiday. But it might constrain how many times we fly.

"This could be up and running within four to 10 years."

A Private Member's Bill to establish DTQs and a trading system was introduced recently by the Labour MP Colin Challen, but this is the first time it has been seriously considered by ministers.