

BITES BULLETIN

APRIL 2026

NEW ZEALAND

ENERGY SPECIAL EDITION

Energy analysts warn petrol stations could run dry within weeks

A former petrochemical engineer has warned Kiwis to prepare for potential fuel shortages, claiming the country could face empty petrol stations within weeks.

NZ Outdoors and Freedom Party energy spokesman Lester Bryant told RCR that the Government was deflecting blame over fuel supply risks instead of being upfront with the public. "The discussion needs to be: what do we do in the days and weeks that we run out of fuel", he said.

Federated Farmers board member David Birkett said maintaining fuel security was critical for farmers, although demand typically dropped heading into winter, which could ease short-term pressure. However, he warned that renewed farming activity in the spring would require more diesel for freight, agriculture and other essential services. "Our demand is relatively predictable, but panic buying is making the situation worse", he said.

Energy economist Richard Meade said New Zealand should already be taking steps to reduce fuel consumption, adding that contingencies to curb fuel use should be rolled out sooner rather than later. "We are a small player at the end of a global supply chain, and we need to be doing more to get through this", he said.

Cameron Bagrie from Bagrie Economics said, "we are going to take a hit", and that the longer the crisis lasted, the worse it would be for the economy. Bagrie suggested productivity relief as a temporary solution.

Geotechnician David Bennett told RCR that New Zealand's light sweet crude could be refined into diesel in Taranaki within a year. While most of the 15,000 barrels produced each day were exported, he said a simple topping facility could supply domestic needs. He said exploration remained underdeveloped because of restrictive policies, despite available on- and offshore opportunities.

Meanwhile on social media, National MP for Southland Joseph Mooney said that parts of the South Island sit on more than nine billion tonnes of lignite in 10 major deposits - containing more than 20 times the energy content of the Maui gas field.

Check out our energy coverage at www.rcr.media/energy



BAGRIE: 'WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A HIT'

Paul Brennan catches up with economist Cameron Bagrie about the mounting economic risks of a fuel supply shock. He says New Zealand will take an economic hit, the question is how big that will be. Bagrie says broad fuel tax cuts may be less effective than targeted support.



EXPERT: NZ COULD BE REFINING DIESEL IN A YEAR

Paul Brennan speaks with David Bennett, an experienced oil and gas geophysicist, about New Zealand's vulnerability at the end of the global fuel supply chain. David says a topping refinery in Taranaki could be made a reality to refine local crude in about a year if the political will could be found.



DIESEL REMAINS AT CRUNCH POINT AS FUEL ALERT SYSTEM INTRODUCED

Paul Brennan speaks with Assistant Energy Minister Shane Jones after the Government unveiled a four-phase fuel response plan. Jones says the country's just-in-time import model has left it exposed after the loss of refinery storage, with diesel the biggest concern (with Finance Minister Nicola Willis confirming 17.5 days worth of diesel in NZ as at 6 April).

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