

For immediate release
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Russia to Ratify Kyoto, Protocol's Carbon Trading Condemned

Today, Russia's lower house of parliament ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Today's action means the international global warming treaty is just days away from ratification in Russia and months away from coming into force globally..

“While we support the Kyoto Protocol as a first step, we need much stronger action by polluting countries like the U.S., and soon,” said Daphne Wysham, a Fellow with the Institute for Policy Studies. “All of the emissions reductions Kyoto requires of rich countries can be met by playing a dangerous shell game called carbon trading—which gives the illusion of meaningful action, but means more business as usual.”

The Kyoto Protocol will create transferable rights from country to country to dump carbon in the biosphere far in excess of the earth's ability to handle it. Corporations are spending billions of dollars to protect their rights to dump greenhouse gases, while the costs of future reductions in fossil fuel use—as well as the cost of climate change itself—are already falling disproportionately on the public sector, communities, indigenous peoples and individual taxpayers.

“It is unreasonable to expect that the most serious environmental problem the world has known will be solved by giving new privileges to the very corporations that have helped create it,” continued Wysham.

“Averting the climate crisis means, above all else, reducing investment in and use of fossil fuels, yet carbon trading lets big polluters delay reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by pushing developing countries into becoming their carbon colonies,” said Michael Dorsey, assistant professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College.

Among the new carbon "dump" projects on the books already are land-gobbling eucalyptus plantations in Brazil, monoculture pine plantations subject to severe fire risk in a treeless zone high in the Andes, and toxic waste dumps in South Africa and coal mines in China made more profitable by investment aimed at capturing methane. In addition to their questionable contribution to climate protection, such projects help marginalize already vulnerable local communities by appropriating land, water or air supporting their lives and livelihoods.

The global trade in carbon was recently scrutinized by scientists and specialists who gathered in Durban, South Africa from October 4-7, 2004; they emerged with a statement condemning the rapidly emerging market in carbon as a false solution to the problem. Participants came from Australia, Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, India, The Netherlands, Samoa, South Africa, Sweden, Uganda, the UK, the US and Uruguay.

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To view the Durban Declaration on carbon trading, visit: www.sinkswatch.org