



EPA publishes greenhouse gas projections

THE Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has released projections of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions to 2020. The projections update those published in the 'National Climate Change Strategy' in April 2007 and give a picture of Ireland's ability to meet international targets, if current policies and programmes are implemented.

The EPA projections highlight an ongoing challenge for Ireland to meet its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol targets. The projections are reported on a sectoral basis and highlight once again that the key sectors contributing to greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland are **agriculture**, energy and transport.

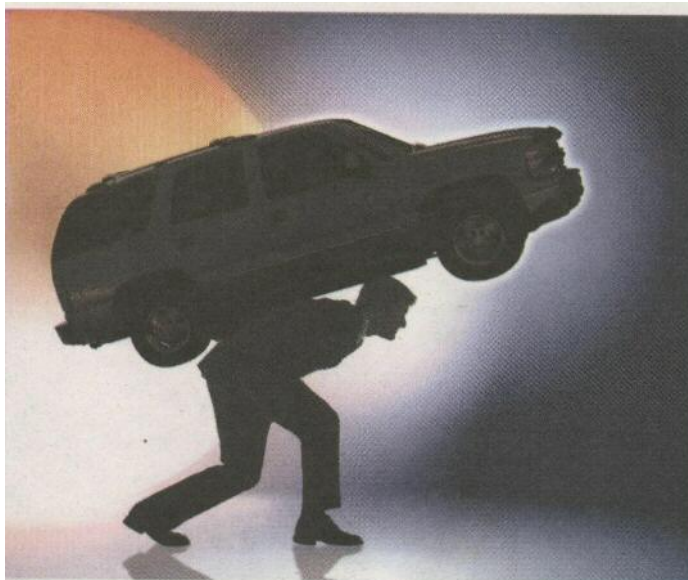
Commenting on the projections, Dr Mary Kelly, director-general of the EPA, says: "Meeting the proposed targets over the years to 2020 will be extremely challenging and further emphasises that actions to reduce domestic emissions must be intensified and strengthened."

Projected greenhouse gas emissions have been produced by the EPA for both the Kyoto targets and the proposed EU 2020 targets under three different policy scenarios. They show the potential outlook for greenhouse gas emissions up to 2020.

All three scenarios assume a 'low-growth' economic outlook for the period 2007–2020.

The Kyoto Protocol limits Ireland's total national emissions to an average of 62.8 million tonnes of **carbon** dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) per year in the period 2008–2012. This is 13pc above the EPA's baseline estimate.

Under the most ambitious reduction scenario, total greenhouse gas emissions are projected to be, on average, five million tonnes per



annum of CO₂e higher than our Kyoto Protocol target for each year of the period 2008–2012.

A second, different target is proposed for Ireland under the EU Commission's Energy and Climate Package, currently being debated at European level. The commission's package of proposals initially requires Ireland to deliver a 20pc reduction, relative to 2005 levels, in greenhouse gas emissions.

This target is to be reached by 2020 and excludes the sectors covered by the Emissions Trading Scheme. The total proposed EU reduction may be increased to 30pc by 2020 if and when a new global climate change agreement is reached.

"A 20pc reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the non-trading sector is going to be very difficult to achieve without radical change. The non-trading sector consists of **agriculture**, transport, residential

and other sectors, but excludes the energy and large industrial sectors; they are being dealt with under the cap and trade system of the Emissions Trading Directive," says Kelly.

Under the most ambitious reduction scenario, national emissions are projected to be seven million tonnes of CO₂e higher in 2020 than the proposed target for that year.

Dr Ken Macken, programme manager, EPA Climate Change Unit, adds: "It is clear from EPA projections that meeting Kyoto targets in 2012 will be possible with extra purchase of **carbon** credits. Meeting the 2020 targets will be much more difficult, with the non-trading sector projected to exceed the EU-proposed target by seven million tonnes."