



COPE'S ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

COPE is clear that the earth, the oceans as well as the atmosphere surrounding our planet have all been seriously compromised on account of our total dependence on carbon based fossil fuels to drive our economy. It will not be easy to redress the problem nor will it be cheap considering its magnitude. The economies of the world that are breaking away from oil and coal are showing greater growth than those that are still clinging to the fuels that pollute and are precipitating an ecological disaster. Sweden and Iceland are prime examples.

The imposition of carbon taxes, side by side with grants for innovative use of non polluting and clean energy and the creation of carbon sinks throughout the country, is no longer a choice but an urgent necessity.

Investments in photovoltaic and solar-thermal installations in the Karroo where solar radiation is the most abundant will easily supply all of our country's energy needs without anyone having to resort to rooftop installations.

COPE believes that subsidies should be increasingly and purposefully switched from installations using fossil fuels to those that produce clean energy. This is doubly cost effective and sustainable. Legislation must promote a rapid reversal of course. Clear signals should be sent to all parties to steer away from dependence on fossil fuels as the tax measures will becoming increasingly more punitive over time.

South Africa's transmission system operated by Escom should begin to deliver power derived from the sun, wind, ocean tides and geothermal wells. A COPE led government will remove all obstacles from the path of those that begin to produce clean energy while it will begin to impose restrictions and tax burdens on those that continue to rely on fossil fuels.

COPE will also begin to be assertive on matters of [ecology](#), [extinction](#), [biosafety](#), and [biosecurity](#). Support for organic agriculture will have to be implemented across the country.

Water pollution from "point sources" like industrial facilities and wastewater treatment plants and "non point sources" such as agricultural and suburban run off will be strictly monitored and better regulated.

COPE will also require that continuous measurements be taken to ascertain global and ocean warming and the impact of these on climate and precipitation within South Africa and the region.

While regulations, incentives and disincentives all have a role to play, it is education and activism that will have to be most heavily relied on to create a shift of mindset.

Environmental issues are no longer peripheral to policy formulation but are central to them.