

# The biggest environmental problems

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[car data 2016](#) [http://www.ump.co.uk/news/transport/141770/what-are-the-biggest-environmental-problems-2017-04-05](#) The was an environmental sermon at church this week. This got me thinking about what I considered the biggest environmental problems. Whilst I don't think we've got climate change and peak oil entirely licked, things at least on the energy front are moving strongly in the right direction. Trump of course threatens action on these but even he will find it difficult to force up the costs of wind, solar and energy storage. The biggest environmental problems currently in my view comprise the particulates issue and plastic pollution\*. The second of these is a real shocker. Go anywhere in the country and shredded plastic is stuck on trees. My garden is not completely immune and most if it is down to me, from bits of plastic sheeting I have used to cover stuff which has shredded in the wind. My pledge is collect all this as I find it from now on. On the former there was some very interesting articles on the radio this morning. The Mayor of London Sadiq Khan is to introduce a congestion charge for diesel cars and [independent emissions testing](#). The most revealing interview was with the government's former chief scientific advisor Sir David King who advised government 20 years ago when the decision to encourage diesels was made. He said the decision was made to go far diesels for climate change reasons knowing that there was a problem over particulates but trusting the car manufacturers who promised to solve it. The problem was they have not. The graph above shows the depth of the problem on NOx. The data is official data for current models on sale in the UK (source DFT). The difference is extremely highly significant for over 2000 different models and shows that petrol cars produce significantly less NOx. The error bars show the standard deviations of the data. There is no doubt we need to change to petrol/electric/walking/cycling as fast as possible. \* of course these problems are related to the other two anyway. Neil

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