

Funding the Future

Article URL

Published: January 12, 2026, 6:55 pm

I am aware that not all who have commented here are convinced that tax can be used to save the environment, [as I have been suggesting](#) over the last few days.

In part I accept those critics' point: by itself tax cannot save the environment. But then, by itself very little can. What is required to save the environment are radical changes to the way that we live. And in my opinion tax both signals what those desirable changes are, and reinforces them.

Raising revenue is not the issue: the aim of these taxes is to change the behaviour that they address. The desired revenue is then precisely nothing: that would be the sign that they had worked. This is how taxes of this sort should work. And precisely because I do think that they can work, even if imperfectly (just like almost everything else we humans have ever come up with) I will be suggesting more such taxes.

Another one that we very obviously need is a variant on a land value tax. Recent [reports in the Guardian](#) have shown how skewed the ownership of the UK is. Just 5% of land is used for housing. Of the rest a very large part is owned by the old aristocracy or newly concentrated capital. And we know land use is a big issue in climate change. I am convinced by the evidence that some forms of farming - most especially of cattle and sheep - is harmful. I am equally persuaded we need many more trees.

The obvious need is, then, for a land value tax on all land, excepting maybe housing where other options exist. And the tax due should be determined by the use of the land. I am not suggesting for a moment I have worked out all the details of such a tax. But I am confident enough to suggest that the rate should be positive unless the land is wooded.

And what should the proceeds be used for? I would suggest for protecting the land for use. We are going to suffer increased flooding in the UK. In East Anglia vast areas, as far inland as Bedford, unless the Wash is dammed as a flood protection measure sometime soon. The need for action is urgent. And a tax could assist that process of change.