



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

For Immediate Release
November 8, 2017

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Statement from Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Geoengineering: Innovation, Research, and Technology

Chairman Smith: First, I want to thank you, the Chairman of the Environment Subcommittee, and the Chairman of the Energy Subcommittee, Rep. Weber of Texas, for holding this important hearing, and Rep. McNerney of California for his persistent interest in this subject.

Geoengineering's potential is worth exploring. Generally, we know that the technologies associated with geoengineering could have positive effects on the Earth's atmosphere.

These innovations could help reduce global temperatures or pull excess greenhouse gases out of the atmosphere.

For instance, one of the most intriguing ideas in this field is solar radiation management. This concept involves finding innovative strategies to reduce the amount of sunlight that reaches and warms the earth.

Today, one of our witnesses will expand on this idea with a concept that brightens clouds and reflects sunlight, which is measured in albedo.

While this technology is interesting, we have a lot to learn.

Some have questioned the unintended consequences of geoengineering. One concern is that brightening clouds could alter rain patterns, making it rain more in some places or less in others.

Such technologies could drastically reduce global temperatures in the future by spraying aerosols into the atmosphere to reflect sunlight.

While we are not sure this is plausible, some scientists believe it could achieve substantial environmental benefits at a cheaper cost than regulations.

Regardless of these claims, we still do not know enough about this subject to thoroughly understand the pros and cons of these types of technologies.

As the climate continues to change, geoengineering could become a tool to curb resulting impacts.

Instead of forcing unworkable and costly government mandates on the American people, we should look to technology and innovation to lead the way to address climate change.

Geoengineering should be considered when discussing technological advances to protect the environment.

And geoengineering should not be ignored before we have an opportunity to discover its potential. This hearing will help Congress do that.

I thank our witnesses today for testifying on the current state of geoengineering research and for their recommendations about how to advance practicable efforts in this area.

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