

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Environment
Subcommittee on Energy
“Geoengineering: Innovation, Research, and Technology”
November 8, 2017

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Last week, the U.S. Global Change Research Program released the Fourth National Climate Assessment – an authoritative assessment of the science of climate change. Among other troubling observations, the Assessment states that, “the magnitude of climate change beyond the next few decades will depend primarily on the amount of greenhouse gases (especially carbon dioxide) emitted globally...continued growth in [carbon dioxide] emissions over this century and beyond would lead to an atmospheric concentration not experienced in tens of to hundreds of millions of years. There is broad consensus that the further and the faster the Earth system is pushed towards warming, the greater the risk of unanticipated changes and impacts, some of which are potentially large and irreversible.”

These findings are a stark reminder of what we must now overcome to avoid potentially severe impacts on the lives of future generations. Make no mistake, this challenge only becomes harder to overcome the longer we wait to act, and we will have fewer and fewer options at our disposal to address the growing consequences of climate change. I am encouraged that we are holding this hearing today to discuss the research necessary to evaluate geoengineering as one potential method in our toolbox to address the impacts of climate change. It is important that we advance technologies and processes that may help alleviate the burden of populating an ever-modernizing globe, but we should do so in a manner that is responsible to the long-term health of the environment and the public.

As these innovative technologies develop, they must not be viewed as an excuse to pollute our atmosphere at greater rates, nor should we ignore the necessity to mitigate climate impacts. Nor should we cease exploring methods to achieve reductions to carbon emissions. As we explore potential methods of addressing this issue in our skies, we must not forget that reducing and eliminating carbon emissions starts here on the ground.

I look forward to listening to the testimony today, and am appreciative that as a nation we are exploring efforts to support research in this area. We must continue to make the necessary investments in these kinds of potential innovations, while continuing to focus our efforts on reducing carbon emissions. Thank you and I yield back.