



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

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Media Contacts: Thea McDonald, Brandon VerVelde
(202) 225-6371

Statement from Chairman Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.)
Geoengineering: Innovation, Research, and Technology

Chairman Biggs: Good morning and welcome to today's joint Environment Subcommittee and Energy Subcommittee hearing on geoengineering. I'd like to thank our witnesses for being here today.

Since this is the first time we are discussing the topic of geoengineering this Congress, it is important to explain what geoengineering actually is.

In simplest terms, geoengineering is the concept of using scientific understanding to alter the atmosphere in a way that produces positive outcomes and results.

Many of the concepts in this field deal with solar radiation management, or how to influence the effects of the sun on the earth. But the field is by no means limited to solar research. Geoengineering can also be used to manipulate different levels of gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide.

These avenues of geoengineering research and others are still in the developmental stage, and any or all of them may warrant further exploration. While there are at least a few programs in our nation's universities that are looking into these concepts, federal research is still limited.

However, if in the future the government wants to actually apply the concepts and findings of geoengineering research, we must fully examine both the potential merits and potential pitfalls of this emergent field.

Since the theories and concepts involved are still so new, we cannot say definitively if geoengineering technology warrants full-scale development or deployment. Quite simply, more basic research is necessary to determine whether it is a viable tool.

Today, we will learn about what research has been conducted on geoengineering and which promising concepts should be explored further. We will hear from government, academia, think tank and industry representatives who have unique perspectives on this topic. They will tell us about the research being done, as well as future concepts and how they could be used responsibly.

We as lawmakers have a responsibility to explore these concepts, learn as much as possible about them and discuss ideas about how we can be helpful in supporting basic research.

I'd also like to take a moment to clarify any mischaracterizations about this hearing.

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the viability of geoengineering and any early-stage research associated with this approach. The hearing is not a platform to further the debate about climate change. Instead, its aim is to explore approaches and technologies that have been discussed in the scientific community and to assess the basic research needed to better understand the merits of these ideas.

It is my hope that members will respect this focus so that we can have a meaningful discussion.

Again, I want to thank the witnesses for being here today and I look forward to hearing more about these interesting concepts.

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