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Geoengineering Research Needed, Members Hear

(Washington, DC) – Today, **House Committee on Science and Technology** held a [hearing](#) to examine geoengineering, the deliberate large-scale modification of the earth's climate systems to counteract climate change, beyond traditional strategies to reduce emissions.

"My decision to hold this hearing should not in any way be misconstrued as an endorsement of any geoengineering activity, and the timing has nothing to do with the pending negotiations in Copenhagen," said **Chairman Bart Gordon (D-TN)**. "But this issue is too important for us to keep our heads in the sand. We must get ahead of geoengineering before it gets ahead of us, or worse, before we find ourselves in a climate emergency with inadequate information as to the full range of options. As Chairman of the Committee of jurisdiction, I feel a responsibility to begin a public dialogue and develop a record on geoengineering."

Witnesses and Members discussed the potential environmental risks and benefits of various proposals, associated domestic and international governance issues, evaluation mechanisms and criteria, research and development (R&D) needs, and economic rationales supporting the deployment of geoengineering activities. There was consensus among the witnesses on the need for R&D to better understand geoengineering options and side effects, and there was agreement that no forms of geoengineering should be deployed now or until all the potential ramifications had been carefully studied, including ethical and political concerns, and the potential for catastrophic environmental side-effects.

"Geoengineering should only be considered as a potential stopgap tool, in the event of a crisis, and should be part of a much wider package of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies," said **Gordon**. "In the meantime, nothing should stop us from pursuing aggressive long-term domestic and global strategies for achieving deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions."

Chairman Gordon announced that this hearing will be part of a partnership with the United Kingdom House of Commons Science and Technology Committee. The two Committees will hold parallel hearings and share materials once they are publically available.

"Geoengineering has decidedly global implications, and research should be considered in the context of a transparent international process," said **Gordon**. "Yesterday the Commons Committee voted to undertake a parallel effort to examine the domestic and international regulatory frameworks that may be applicable to geoengineering. We will be in close contact with them, sharing the findings from our own efforts. When they complete their work in the spring the Chairman of the Committee will testify before us in a hearing on domestic and international governance issues."

The House Committee on Science and Technology is planning additional hearings in the winter and spring to examine the underlying science, engineering, ethical, economic and governance concerns in greater detail.

For more information on the Committee's work on [geoengineering](#), please visit our [website](#).

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Bart Gordon, Chairman
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