



The Washington
Geoengineering Consortium

CIVIL SOCIETY MEETING *on* GEOENGINEERING

NOVEMBER 4, 2013

1:30–5:30 PM

Johns Hopkins University, Nitze Building
1740 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036

An Initiative of

The School of International Service, American University
The Energy Policy and Climate Program, Johns Hopkins University &
The School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University



JOHNS HOPKINS
UNIVERSITY

CIVIL SOCIETY MEETING *on* GEOENGINEERING

“Geoengineering” describes the effort to develop and deploy large-scale technological systems to combat climate change. The conversation concerning the desirability and possibility of geoengineering interventions is evolving rapidly, and the moment appears ripe for greater levels of civil society engagement. Our meeting is designed as a first step. It will open an exchange among Washington, DC-based civil society organizations about geoengineering’s far-reaching implications and about the benefits and risks of being involved in the geoengineering discussion.

Following some brief introductory remarks, the afternoon will be built around two hour-long small-group moderated conversations. The first moderated session will focus on the potential benefits and risks of geoengineering and examine emerging ideas about governance. The second session will tackle questions of justice and the role to be played by civil society in shaping the geoengineering conversation moving forward. The sessions have been designed to allow ample space for input from each participant.

Please note that a written record will be taken during discussion sessions, without attribution. A summary of the discussion will be shared with you and your organization. The chief goal is to prompt an open conversation and then to foster ongoing dialogue about this important emerging issue.

TO REGISTER:

Send your name and affiliation to geoengineering@american.edu
Or visit www.american.edu/sis/geoengineering

AGENDA

1:30–2:30 PM Panel Geoengineering Introduction

The meeting will open with a short panel discussion to explore the current state of science and research on geoengineering technologies, as well as to introduce the major strains of conversation around the topic. What is the work that is happening and who is doing it? What are the various arguments being deployed in favor of research and deployment of various geoengineering approaches? What are the major objections? Who are the actors with a stake in the development of geoengineering technologies, and how do their various interests align or clash?

2:30–2:45 PM Coffee Break

The opening sessions will be followed by two one-hour moderated conversations, based around small group discussions to allow input from participants.

2:45–3:45 PM Discussion Session 1 — Benefits and Risks for People and the Climate

The first moderated session will focus on the potential benefits and risks of research and potential deployment of various geoengineering technologies.

Participants will be invited to engage with the following kinds of questions:

- What are the chief environmental, social, and political implications of the major geoengineering technologies now under consideration?
- What are the impacts of broader climate change mitigation efforts of increased attention to geoengineering?
- How compelling are ethical arguments for and against investment in geoengineering research and deployments?

3:45–4:00 PM Coffee Break

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4:00–5:00 PM Discussion Session 2 — Justice and Civil Society’s Role

The second session will tackle questions of justice and the role to be played by civil society in shaping the geoengineering conversation moving forward. Climate change most threatens those who are already worst off. Some commentators have suggested that geoengineering would be a boon to marginalized populations, by offering real, readily deployable responses to climate change-related hazards. Others have suggested that geoengineering technologies threaten to replicate existing patterns of exclusion by concentrating decision-making and other forms of authority in troubling ways.

At the same time, there is much confusion about what geoengineering entails. Few in the broader public are familiar with the term geoengineering, let alone the sorts of activities that the term seeks to describe. Robust civil society engagement with geoengineering entails, at least in part, the sparking of a meaningful public conversation.

This session will ask participants to grapple with the following sorts of concerns:

- For whose benefit are geoengineering technologies being developed, and to whose potential detriment?
- What will it take to ensure that those who are already excluded from the climate conversation have their voices and wellbeing protected if geoengineering should advance?
- What are the North-South implications of geoengineering?
- How should civil society engage the public over geoengineering, and to what purpose?

5:00–5:30 PM Panel Review and Next Steps

A written record will be taken during discussion sessions, without attribution. A summary of the discussion will be published to this website in the weeks following the meeting. The meeting will be helpful for civil society organizations that are engaged in shaping climate, health, and human rights policy in trying to understand the risks and benefits of engaging with the conversation around geoengineering technologies.