



You are here:

- [Parliament home page](#)
 - [Parliamentary business](#)
 - [Committees](#)
 - [Committees archive](#)
 - [Commons Science and Technology Committee](#)
 - Science and Technology Committee

Science and Technology Committee

- [Committee Home Page](#)
- [Reports and Publications](#)
- [Members](#)
- [Meetings](#)
- [Press Notices](#)
- [Contact Details](#)

The Regulation of Geoengineering

The Regulation of Geoengineering

Report published

The Committee published '[The Regulation of Geoengineering](#)', HC 221, Fifth Report of Session 2009-10, on Thursday 18 March 2010. The report includes the oral and written evidence.

UK/US collaboration

UK COMMITTEE CHAIR GIVES EVIDENCE TO US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE

Phil Willis MP, Science and Technology Committee Chair, today [18 March] gives evidence via video link to the US House of Representatives Committee on Science and Technology as part of a novel approach to parallel scrutiny.

Both Committees have been examining geoengineering - activities designed to change the global climate with the aim of reducing human caused climate change. The Commons Committee has published its report on the regulation of geoengineering today.

Mr Willis will give evidence as part of the US House Committee's hearing on domestic and international governance of geoengineering research.

Commenting, Phil Willis MP said: "What better subject than geoengineering - where international collaboration is essential if we are to explore and understand fully its potential - to provide the backdrop to a first-of-its-kind collaboration between UK and US scrutiny committees.

"As we conclude in our report, it is vital if future global challenges are to be met that parliamentarians across the globe realise the benefits of working together."

Phil Willis will give evidence at 1600 GMT and the hearing is available to watch online:

http://science.house.gov/publications/hearings_markup_details.aspx?NewsID=2764

Terms of Reference

The Science and Technology Committee on 5 November 2009 announced a new inquiry into the regulation of geoengineering. The House of Commons inquiry is being coordinated with an inquiry into geoengineering which the US Congressional Science and Technology Committee starting the same day.

The Commons inquiry follows on from the major inquiry that the Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee completed in March 2008, Engineering: turning ideas into reality, which took 'geoengineering' as a case study. The Report examined activities specifically and deliberately designed to effect a change in the global climate with the aim of minimising or reversing man-made climate change.

Building on the earlier work the new inquiry will focus on one aspect of geoengineering: the regulation of geoengineering, particularly international regulation and regulation within the UK. The following terms of reference will be used for the Commons inquiry.

Is there a need for international regulation of geoengineering and geoengineering research and if so, what international regulatory mechanisms need to be developed?

How should international regulations be developed collaboratively?

What UK regulatory mechanisms apply to geoengineering and geoengineering research and what changes will need to be made for purpose of regulating geoengineering?

The Committee invited written evidence from interested organisations and individuals addressing these points by 9 December 2009. The deadline has therefore passed.

Commenting on the launch of the inquiry, Phil Willis MP, Chairman of the House of Commons Science and Technology, said:

"Both committees are eager to work together. A subject such as geoengineering which potentially affects the whole planet is an ideal subject on which to work collaboratively with the US Congress.

"The plan is that the submissions received by the Commons Committee will be published on the internet and passed to the US Committee and our Committee's conclusions and recommendations to be published and used to inform the wider US inquiry into

geoengineering. Similarly the House of Representatives' evidence and transcripts of its proceeding will be considered by the Commons Committee.

"Parliamentarians and parliamentary committees have a vital part to play in raising and scrutinising subjects such as this and our effectiveness can only be enhanced when we work together. I hope that this will be the first example of much more collaborative work in the future."

Congressman Bart Gordon, Chairman of the US House of Representatives Science and Technology, speaking in London on 2 November to a science conference said:

"Geoengineering is [...] topic that will need international collaboration. Any actions could have repercussions that reach well beyond any individual country's borders, and there are many areas for potential collaboration in trying to understand the necessary research. To that end, the US Congressional Science and Technology Committee has agreed with the UK's S&T committee to have parallel hearings into the national and international implications of geoengineering projects. And we intend to develop a roadmap for our executive branches to move forward, both in research, and in treaties. We hope to publish a report next March, and would welcome any other assembly committees to join us in this effort."

Oral evidence

Previous session:

Wednesday 13 January 2010

Dr Jason J Blackstock, Centre for International Governance Innovation, Canada, Professor David Keith, Director, ISEEE Energy and Environmental Systems Group, and John Virgoe, expert in geoengineering governance [all via video link]; Sir David King, Director of the Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment and former Government Chief Scientific Adviser, and Dr Maarten van Aalst, Associate Director and Lead Climate Specialist at the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre; Joan Ruddock MP, Minister of State, Department of Energy and Climate Change, Professor David MacKay, Chief Scientific Adviser, Department of Energy and Climate Change, and Professor Nick Pidgeon, on behalf of RCUK.

One witness [Dr Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Senior Advisor of Environmental Law and Conventions, United Nations Environment Programme] was unable to give oral evidence due to the failure of the video link from Kenya.

Press notices

18/03/10 [UK/US collaboration](#)

18/03/10 [Report published](#)

11/03/10 [Report to be published](#)

05/11/09 [Inquiry announced](#)