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## Science and Technology Committee Announcement

**Session 2008-09**

**5 November 2009**

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### **NEW INQUIRY: THE REGULATION OF GEOENGINEERING**

Commons Committee to work in unique collaboration with US Congressional Committee

The Science and Technology Committee has today 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 starts today.

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 welcomes written evidence from interested organisations and individuals addressing these points by **noon on Wednesday 9 December 2009**.

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."

As well as written evidence, the Commons Committee plan to hold an oral evidence session in January 2010.

Each submission should:

- a) be no more than 3,000 words in length
- b) be in Word format (no later than 2003) with as little use of colour or logos as possible
- c) have numbered paragraphs
- d) include a declaration of interests.

A copy of the submission should be sent by e-mail to [scitechcom@parliament.uk](mailto:scitechcom@parliament.uk) and marked "Geoengineering". An additional paper copy should be sent to:

The Clerk  
Science and Technology Committee  
House of Commons  
7 Millbank  
London SW1P 3JA

It would be helpful, for Data Protection purposes, if individuals submitting written evidence send their contact details separately in a covering letter. You should be aware that there may be circumstances in which the House of Commons will be required to communicate information to third parties on request, in order to comply with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Please supply a postal address so a copy of the Committee's report can be sent to you upon publication.

A guide for written submissions to Select Committees may be found on the parliamentary

website at: [www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/witguide.htm](http://www.parliament.uk/commons/selcom/witguide.htm)

Please also note that:

— Material already published elsewhere should not form the basis of a submission, but may be referred to within a proposed memorandum, in which case a hard copy of the published work should be included.

— Memoranda submitted must be kept confidential until published by the Committee, unless publication by the person or organisation submitting it is specifically authorised.

— Once submitted, evidence is the property of the Committee. The Committee normally, though not always, chooses to make public the written evidence it receives, by publishing it on the internet (where it will be searchable), by printing it or by making it available through the Parliamentary Archives. If there is any information you believe to be sensitive you should highlight it and explain what harm you believe would result from its disclosure. The Committee will take this into account in deciding whether to publish or further disclose the evidence.

— Select Committees are unable to investigate individual cases.

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