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CLIMATE: Energy commission launches geoengineering task force

By Jenny Mandel

E&E News, Greenwire

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<http://www.bipartisanpolicy.org/news/articles/2010/03/climate-energy-commission-launches-geoengineering-task-force>

The bipartisan National Commission on Energy Policy has created a task force to examine research and policy issues associated with geoengineering -- modifying the environment on a large scale to change the Earth's atmosphere.

The task force aims to make recommendations to Congress and the Obama administration this summer.

"We cannot rule out the possibility that climate change will come upon us faster and harder than we can manage," said Jane Long, co-chairwoman of the new group and associate director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's Energy and Environment directorate. "Prudence dictates we try to create more options to help manage the problem and learn whether these are good options or bad options."

Long is slated to testify today at a House Science and Technology Committee hearing on domestic and international research on geoengineering. Chairman Bart Gordon (D-Tenn.) is working on legislation to establish a federal research program on the subject, likely within the Energy Department (ClimateWire, Feb. 26).

"The exploration of geoengineering must be bipartisan, international, and transparent in order to properly address these complex challenges," Gordon said in a statement on the new task force. "The bipartisan National Commission on Energy Policy will provide an essential forum for intelligent discourse on viable policy options informed by science."

Stephen Rademaker, the other co-chairman of the commission and a former State Department official who now works at BGR Government Affairs, said the task force would look at the appropriate U.S. role in geoengineering to address an "international policy void" on the issue and reduce the risks associated with a haphazard global approach.

"Some geoengineering techniques ... can, in theory, be implemented cheaply and quickly, but naturally it is important to be alert to the potential unintended consequences," he said.

The task force, which encompasses experts in science, technology, national security, ethics and other fields, met for the first time last week. NCEP Research Director Sasha Mackler is the staff lead for the group.

Other members of the task force:

James Anderson, Harvard University professor of atmospheric chemistry.

Richard Benedick, senior adviser at the Joint Global Change Research Institute, and former chief U.S. negotiator for the Montreal Protocol.
Ken Caldeira, senior scientist with the Carnegie Institution.

Joe Chaisson, research and technical director with the Clean Air Task Force.

Stephen Gardiner, associate professor, the University of Washington's philosophy department.

David Goldston, director of government affairs at the Natural Resources Defense Council and former staff director for the House Science Committee.

Steven Hamburg, chief scientist at the Environmental Defense Fund.

David Keith, director of ISEEE Energy and Environmental Systems Group, Earth Sciences University of Calgary.

Ron Lehman, director of the Center for Global Security Research, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

Frank Loy, former undersecretary for global affairs, State Department.

Granger Morgan, engineering professor, Carnegie Mellon University.

Daniel Sarewitz, director of the Consortium for Science, Policy and Outcomes, Arizona State University.

Thomas Schelling, professor emeritus, University of Maryland.

John Shepherd, professorial research fellow in earth system science, University of Southampton, and chairman of the Royal Society's geoengineering report.

David Victor, professor at the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, University of California, San Diego.

David Whelan, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems chief scientist and vice president of Boeing Corp., and former director of the tactical technology office of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

David Winickoff, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California, Berkeley.

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