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Geoengineering Governance

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July 13, 2009

*Issues in Legal Scholarship, Vol. 8, No. 3, 2009***Abstract:**

The difficulties encountered in accomplishing the drastic greenhouse gas emissions reductions necessary to avoid dangerous anthropogenic interference with the Earth's climate system have led to incipient interest in geoengineering. Geoengineering proposals, such as the release of sulfur into the stratosphere in order to block sunlight, might serve as an emergency option should emissions reductions efforts fail, or even as a nonemergency policy alternative to emission reductions. This article examines the largely unexplored issue of geoengineering governance, namely, questions regarding who should decide whether geoengineering research or deployment should go forward, how such decisions should be made, and what mechanisms should be in place to address the risk of deployment by rogue actors. The article recommends that the international community begin to address geoengineering governance promptly through the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the bodies established by that agreement, and that geoengineering governance be treated as a series of adaptive management decisions to be reviewed periodically. Such an approach will allow the incorporation of new information into the decisionmaking process and promote the development of consensus and international norms with respect to geoengineering techniques.

Keywords: environment, climate change, geoengineering,

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