

Press release: Geoengineering our oceans needs to be halted

June 8, 2024



****Alameda City Shows Technofixes are a Dangerous Distraction****

8 June, 2024, for immediate release

On UN World Oceans Day, over 100 civil society organizations including NGOs, Indigenous Peoples' groups, climate justice networks and social justice movements from across the world have signaled their deep concern about the growing number of open air and water marine geoengineering experiments in defiance of international agreements, calling on governments to prevent them from taking place.

Ahead of the Oceans Dialogue at UNFCCC 60th subsidiary body meeting currently taking place in Bonn, Germany, civil society groups have also raised concerns that these meetings have become another entry point for geoengineering proponents to legitimize marine geoengineering.

Geoengineering our oceans is a dangerous distraction from the real solutions to the climate crisis. "Another session of the UN climate talks is taking place, and it's time for governments step up and take responsibility to prevent such experiments, uphold international regulations, protect marine ecosystems and dependent communities, and prioritize real climate solutions like providing climate finance and phasing out fossil fuels while supporting socially and ecologically sustainable alternatives that work for people and communities. The UN climate talks must not encourage or open more entry points for geoengineering and other false solutions," said Eesha Rangani, Hand Off Mother Earth! (HOME) Alliance.

In a statement released last month civil society reiterated that these projects, often driven by carbon offsets, pose significant threats to marine ecosystems and communities. "Techniques like, ocean alkalization, large algae monocultures, biomass sinking and other geoengineering techniques claim to remove carbon from the ocean but are unproven and risky, and could disrupt marine food chains, cause lack of oxygen in some ocean layers and in many ways threaten the natural marine ecosystems that already have a vital role in absorbing CO₂," said Silvia Ribeiro, from ETC Group.

Despite a de facto moratorium on geoengineering under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), commercial interests linked to carbon markets or misguided attempts to tackle climate change have been a driving force behind many of these experiments.

Most recently, an experiment to brighten the clouds in Alameda in California was halted by local authorities when environmental and health concerns were raised.

Mary Church, Geoengineering Campaign Manager at the Center for International Environmental Law said, “We strongly welcome Alameda City Council’s unanimous decision to say no to the first open-air Marine Cloud Brightening experiment in the US. Key concerns raised by council members focused on lack of sufficient information, notice and transparency. The rejection rightfully reflects the gravity of what’s at stake for both local and global communities.”

In addition to potential impacts on marine life and the fragile ecosystem, marine geoengineering also brings new risks to the lives and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples, and traditional communities and fisherfolk who rely on marine and coastal ecosystems. “Air and marine geoengineering experiments, predominantly conducted on Indigenous territories, pose a grave threat to the Sacredness of all life and the traditional values of Indigenous Peoples,” said Panganga Pungowiyi, Geoengineering Organizer of the Indigenous Environment Network.

A Human Rights Council report found that “the potential deployment of [geoengineering technologies] would have a massive and disproportionate impact on Indigenous Peoples whose traditional lands and territories are particularly exposed and at risk of experimental uses”.

Panganga Pungowiyi added, “Marine geoengineering initiatives proceed without the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities, perpetuating a cycle where companies profit by marketing them as carbon credits, enabling continued pollution by fossil fuel companies. The impending widespread implementation of geoengineering at scale not only endangers Indigenous lifeways and cosmovision but also undermines the delicate balance of Mother Earth. Indigenous Peoples who have lived in relationship with their ecosystems for time immemorial must be at the table to discuss climate crisis strategies. We have not been informed, asked, nor have we given our consent.”

—ENDS—

About Hands Off Mother Earth! (HOME) Alliance

The Hands Off Mother Earth! (HOME) Alliance is a driving force in the fight against the growing threat of large-scale technological manipulation of the climate and biodiversity: geoengineering. We are an international civil society network of close to 200 organizations from over 45 different countries, from the Global South and the Global North. HOME was first launched as a global campaign in April 2010 at The World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth in Cochabamba, Bolivia. In October 2018 we released the HOME Manifesto denouncing geoengineering with a demand for an immediate stop to all open-air experiments. Follow us: [X](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [YouTube](#)

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