

Proposed Public Statement by the Emergency SRM Group

NOTE: *This is my proposal for a public statement by concerned individuals who have unilaterally initiated solar radiation management (SRM). It explains why this action was taken and expresses the hope that it will trigger fundamental social changes for long-term ecological survival.*

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Citizens of Earth:

We, the undersigned, are horrified by the human suffering and natural destruction that are now escalating on our overheated planet. We see no evidence that any public or private entity will tackle the global temperature anomaly in time to prevent catastrophic collapse. As the Emergency SRM Group we have therefore dispatched a small fleet of airplanes to inject sulfate particles into the Arctic's upper atmosphere. Our primary aim is to initiate the global cooling required for humankind's short-term survival. We also seek to instigate the profound social shifts required for the long-term continuation of human and non-human life.

Our Group understands that this initiative violates the longstanding SRM taboo and will be heavily criticized. We therefore offer the following responses to the anticipated questions and objections.

1. WHY PROMOTE SOLAR RADIATION MANAGEMENT (SRM)?

The sharp rise in greenhouse-gas (GHG) concentrations over the past few centuries has produced an extreme energy imbalance: far more energy is flowing from the Sun to the Earth than from the Earth into space. This imbalance is responsible for the temperature anomalies that are now wreaking climate havoc. Unfortunately, GHG concentrations cannot be quickly lowered due to energy and material constraints. The standard solution, emissions reductions, is ineffective because it addresses only the increments to the already-disastrous energy imbalance, and because cooling aerosols disappear as emissions decline.

Given these physical realities, the global temperature can be quickly reduced only by reflecting solar radiation before it strikes the Earth's surface. This will prevent its transformation into the heat that is blocked by GHGs. The term SRM refers to the various reflection techniques. Briefly stated, we promote SRM for global cooling because no effective alternative exists.

2. WHY USE THE SULFATE AEROSOL INJECTION (SAI) METHOD?

Several other SRM methods have been proposed (mirrors, cloud brightening, etc.), but the Group chose SAI because it is highly visible and thus a dramatic demonstration of the existential

need for SRM deployment. Once this need has been socially acknowledged, competent analysts must examine all available options, apply scientific and ethical criteria to each, and establish the combination that achieves maximum global cooling as rapidly and safely as possible. SAI may or may not be part of this mix.

3. WHY ACT UNILATERALLY?

The Group took unilateral action for two reasons. First, as noted above, there is no indication that other entities are prepared to act. If not us, who? And when?

Second, global governance on SRM, which is purportedly being pursued today, is both impossible and irrational. It is impossible because the world is far too divided, and SRM's effects are far too diverse, for broad agreement on this contentious issue. It is irrational because consensus is inapplicable to an urgent and life-threatening situation. If an incapacitated driver is about to send a bus over a cliff, it would be absurd for an intervening passenger to seek agreement about the best solution before grabbing the wheel and steering to safety. For a planet careening towards ecological disaster the absurdity is infinitely greater. Emergency action is required NOW!

4. WHY REFER TO FUNDAMENTAL SOCIAL SHIFTS?

Our small-scale project will not significantly moderate the global heat. Achieving this will require massive implementation of the rational SRM mix. However, even a return to the pre-industrial temperature will be insufficient for a sustainable future. Reaching this goal will also entail large-scale damage repair as well as strict control over habitat destruction, non-GHG pollution, plastics dispersal, deforestation, and numerous other harmful human practices.

Humankind's shocking inaction to date has convinced us that these measures are impossible under current economic and political conditions. The most obvious impediment is capitalism - a highly productive but ecologically destructive system that must be replaced by a sustainable alternative. Such fundamental social changes pose political challenges that are beyond our scope. We can only hope that our SRM initiative will spur the formation of theoretically prepared movements that can alter today's societies for the long-term survival of humankind and nature.

(Signatories)