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Green Sheet

Bjorn Lomborg: We Need To Spray Water Into The Air To Cool The Globe

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In the Financial Times, climate pundit Bjorn Lomborg [reiterates](#) his argument that the current policy tactics for combating climate change are expensive and unlikely to do much.

So what's a better alternative? The FT says Lomborg advocates, "tackling sources of climate change other than carbon dioxide, such as methane and soot; investing in new technologies; adapting to the effects of climate change; planting more forests; and weighing up whether emissions cuts are cheaper to do now or later."

Even more specifically, Lomborg's think tank, the [Copenhagen Consensus](#), suggests that geoengineering might be a smart, cheap, route to cut back on global warming. A few examples of geoengineering: Spraying droplets of water into the atmosphere to make bigger clouds, to limit temperature increases, or artificially replicating volcanic eruption.

The group just put out a report assessing the feasibility of such projects. Keith Johnson at Environmental Capital [read the report](#) and says the conclusions are mixed, but "on paper at least, climate engineering looks fantastically attractive. For a [tiny fraction](#) of the cost of curbing global greenhouse-gas emissions, which lead to global warming, scientists could tinker with the atmosphere and avoid the worst effects of climate change."

While the government has paid lip service to the idea of geoengineering, we see almost no chance of this happening. If it can't sell a carbon tax, and cap and trade brings a tooth and nail fight, imagine trying to get the public, as well as politicians around the world, on board with a grand global experiment with the environment.

We have a hard time imagining the president standing before the public saying, "We've decided to use fake volcanic eruptions to eradicate global warming." Also, as Johnson points out, who the hell knows what the side effects of this would be.

Besides, geoengineering wouldn't attack the root cause of global warming. Carbon emissions would keep growing.

Anyway, just because this first round of solutions from the Copenhagen Consensus sounds dubious, doesn't mean the next round will. The group, which has five senior economists, and three Nobel laureates, is working on a big package of solutions which it will deliver in September, just in time for the cap and trade bill debate in the Senate.

Hopefully, we'll see some better ideas than the convoluted cap and trade bill. It really wouldn't take much.

And for all the global warming skeptics out there, Lomborg has a message in the FT: "the basic scientific questions [on climate change] have been answered pretty unequivocally," and he now says of fighting global warming, "It's incredibly important. We need a global deal on the climate."

