



## **Crazy Talk: Geoengineering Goes Mainstream At TED Conference, Stirs Controversy**

Cooling the earth by blocking sunlight would drastically reduce food production, increase migration, regional conflicts and wars. Geoengineers have apparently fallen into the anti-human cult that has no regard for human life. They claim that they are 'saving' the world, but in fact, they will destroy it. □ TN Editor

At TED, a conference about big ideas that's largely attended by tech luminaries, it was inevitable that geoengineering — the idea of changing the earth's atmosphere to halt or reverse climate change — would come up. During the 2017 TED talks in Vancouver, Canada, multiple speakers brought up geoengineering ideas — but one climate scientist pushed back.

On Wednesday morning, computer theorist Danny Hillis got onstage and

proposed a series of ideas for what he called a “thermostat to turn down the temperature of the earth.”

Hillis, the founding partner of tech innovation company Applied Invention, rattled off a number of geoengineering concepts that have popped up in recent years, including building giant parasols in space, putting fizzy water into the ocean, and sending chalk into the atmosphere so that it can reflect sunlight and theoretically cool down the earth.

“We’d have to put chalk up at a rate of 10 teragrams a year to undo the effects of CO<sub>2</sub> we’ve already released,” he said. Here’s how he visualized that on stage:

“It would be like one hose for the entire Earth,” he said.

There are countless reasons why geoengineering schemes like this could be dangerous. There’s a fear that people will stop trying to reduce emissions if they think there’s a quicker fix for the problem, and there are also many risks that come with messing with the planet in ways we don’t fully understand. Even advocates tend to acknowledge these issues.

“I have some very good friends in the audience who I respect a lot who really don’t think I should be talking about this,” Hillis admitted.

After Hillis finished speaking, TED curator Chris Anderson invited the first speaker of the session, climate scientist Kate Marvel, back onstage to discuss Hillis’ ideas.

“Danny, you seem so nice, and I hope we can be friends, and you terrify me,” she said.

Geoengineering, she said, is like going to a doctor who says ‘You have a fever, I know exactly why you have a fever, and we’re not going to treat that. We’re going to give you ibuprofen, and also your nose is going to fall off.’ It is, Marvel believes, a band-aid for the problem accompanied by consequences we can’t currently imagine.

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