

Is it unethical for scientists studying techniques to geoengineer the earth's climate to advocate for additional government funding to expand the study of the science and geopolitics of the topic? That's the conclusion of a recent Guardian [article](#) that criticizes Harvard's David Keith and the Carnegie Institute's Ken Caldeira for a) receiving outside money to study geoengineering; b) having stakes in companies that are developing technology that could be used for geoengineering and c) advocating for additional government research into geoengineering. But their position — that we should seriously study techniques to slow global warming as a last resort in the event that global efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions are insufficient — is hardly a Machiavellian one. Groups as independent and mainstream as the National Academy of Sciences have [taken](#) the same position. Moreover, is it really so unusual for scientists who are professionally invested in a topic to believe that the government should fund additional research?

It isn't as though Caldeira and Keith are advocates for large scale geoengineering as a first order solution to global warming. To the contrary, both are scientists who have focused significant research attention on conventional solutions to cutting greenhouse gases and believe that we must cut emissions dramatically or risk significant and even catastrophic climate change ([here's](#) a sampling of physicist Keith's non-geoengineering research; Caldeira is an [oceanographer](#) who has led the scientific community in assessing the risks of ocean acidification as a result of carbon emissions. Both men have both served as authors of the International Panel on Climate Change assessments). I keep wondering if the topic of the research and funding the scientists had received was something aimed at mitigation carbon emissions — carbon capture and storage, large scale solar deployment, etc. — whether we'd view their government funding advocacy as benign?

What am I missing here?