Global warming pioneer calls for CO2 to be taken from atmosphere and stored underground

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Wally Broeker, the first person to alert the world to Global Warming, has called for atmospheric CO_2 to be captured and stored underground. He says that Carbon Capture, combined with limits on fossil fuel emissions, is the best way to avoid global warming getting out of control over the next fifty years. Professor Broeker (Columbia University, New York) made the call during his presentation to the International Carbon Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland, where 150 scientists are meeting to discuss Carbon Capture and Storage.

He was presenting an analysis which showed that the world has been cooling very slowly, over the last 51 million years, but that human activity is causing a rise in temperature which will lead to problems over the next 100,000 years.

"We have painted ourselves into a tight corner. We can't reduce our reliance of fossil fuels quickly enough, so we need to look at alternatives.

"One of the best ways to deal with this is likely to be carbon capture – in other words, putting the carbon back where it came from, underground. There has been great progress in capturing carbon from industrial processes, but to really make a difference we need to begin to capture atmospheric CO_2. Ideally, we could reach a stage where we could control the levels of CO_2 in the atmosphere, like you control your central heating. Continually increasing CO_2 levels means that we will need to

actively manage CO_2 levels in the environment, not just stop more being produced. The technology is proven, it just needs to be brought to a stage where it can be implemented.

Wally Broeker was speaking at the International Carbon Conference in Reykjavik, where 150 scientists are meeting to discuss how best CO_2 can be removed from the atmosphere as part of a programme to reduce global warming.

Meeting co-convener Professor Eric Oelkers (University College London and University of Toulouse) commented:

"Capture is now at a crossroads; we have proven methods to store carbon in the Earth but are limited in our ability to capture this carbon directly from the atmosphere. We are very good at capturing carbon from factories and power stations, but because roughly two-thirds of our carbon originates from disperse sources, implementing direct air capture is key to solving this global challenge".

More information: The international Carbon Conference takes place in Reykjavik, Iceland, from 25-29 August 2014. Conference website, www.or.is/en/projects/internat … rbon-conference-2014

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