

# **Support Alaska Native Delegation to stop Arctic Ice Project!**

May 10, 2022



**A letter from an Alaska Native delegation calls on the California-based Arctic Ice Project to cease all research operations for projects and methods intended for use in the Arctic. The Arctic Ice Project, a solar geoengineering project that aims to modify ice reflectivity, would lead to the dumping of millions of synthetic silica glass microbeads onto the ice of the Arctic ocean. Silica poses a major risk to human and environmental health.**

On Sunday 1st May, a delegation of Alaska Native leaders held a protest outside a fundraiser for the Arctic Ice Project, delivering a collective letter articulating their concerns about the project, specifically citing the lack of tribal consultation and absence of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). On Monday 2nd May, the delegation held a press conference in the area with local campaigners.

The Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN) press release stated the situation clearly. “The Indigenous Environmental Network and its affiliated groups in Alaska have cited numerous concerns about the project, including the fact that there has been no tribal government consultation, no consent obtained by local communities, and not enough assessment on the environmental impacts of these synthetic beads upon regional ecosystems. Furthermore, while these impacts are concern enough, there is also concern about how the cumulative and future impacts of a scaled-up version could impact the ocean and ocean-dependent communities.”

You can sign in support of the letter **HERE**

The Arctic Ice Project funders ball ‘Ice To See You’ was disrespectfully framed as a special event to save the Arctic, with an evening of dinner and dancing in cocktail attire, colours of ‘cool and reflective white’. Individual tickets cost \$300 and a VIP table of 10 cost \$5,000. Weeks prior to the event the Alaska Native delegation purchased tickets for the fundraiser but were soon given refunds by the organizers, citing that no more seats were available. However, non-Native supporters of the delegation were later able to purchase tickets for the event with no issue.

In 2020, the Arctic Ice Project rebranded themselves from Ice911 (See Geoengineering Monitor’s Ice911 Technology Briefing, 2018 - \*update coming soon!\*). Protesters at the door of the funders ball were told that they were mistaken, and that the Arctic Ice Project had not conducted any field testing in Alaska - despite the Arctic Ice

Project 2020-21 annual report celebrating their testing in Alaska as “the most successful season of testing to date”.

Two representatives tried to dismiss the concerns of the Alaska Native Delegation claiming that the issues of field testing on Indigenous Lands without proper consent were issues associated with Ice911 and Leslie Field. At the time Leslie Field, a former Chevron executive, was still listed as a staff member on their site. Recently, the website has been reorganized, with updates made to their Staff, Board and Volunteer biographies immediately after their annual fundraiser.

*“Failure to develop and test research without true Free Prior and Informed Consent and meaningful consultation is not only unethical, it is dangerous,” said Panganga Pungowiyi, Indigenous mother and IEN Climate Geoengineering Organizer.*

Arctic Ice Project has its largest trial site in North Meadow Lake, on Indigenous Iñupiat territories near Utqiagvik, Alaska. It aims to conduct large-scale testing and deployment of this geoengineering technology on ice, proposing to cover up to a huge area of 100,000 km<sup>2</sup> with synthetic silica glass in various arctic regions, e.g., in Fram Strait and/or Beaufort Gyre.

Leslie Field, who led most of these experiments with the Arctic Ice Project, has also founded in March 2022 a nearly identical project, called [Bright Ice Initiative](#) (See [Geoengineering Monitor’s Map for details](#)). This was discovered by the campaigners at the funders event. Field has been featured with geoengineering advocates such as Cambridge Centre of Climate Repair in the UK and regional governance bodies such as the Arctic Circle Assembly. Both the Arctic Ice Project and newly established Bright Ice Initiative aspire to test in other glacier regions including the Himalayas, Greenland and Canada.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) requires States to consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them (article 19). Under FPIC (article 29), the storage or disposal of hazardous materials on Indigenous peoples’ lands or territories is recognized.

*“We have the right to choose what goes in our bodies, on our lands, in our waters and air”.*

Geoengineering Monitor has followed the concerning developments of the Arctic Ice Project for many years. In 2019, [Geoengineering Monitor interviewed](#) an Iñupiaq community organizer with Native Movement on the dangers and lack of consent with the project.

The Arctic Ice Project and related experiments have been developed without consultation of potentially affected people or respecting their FPIC rights and are ignoring current applicable regulations. No critical assessment of its impacts has been made public by the project. While the existence and immediate social, cultural and environmental impacts of the project are concern enough, the cumulative and future impacts of a scaled-up version should this experiment prove effective, require the immediate attention of national and international regulatory bodies as well as peoples in the targeted territories and civil society organizations.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DELEGATION’S EXPERIENCE AT THE**

