



Paint Roofs White to Fight Climate Change, Energy Chief Says

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By Alex Morales



May 26 (Bloomberg) -- The world should try to have “white roofs everywhere” to help fight climate change, U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said.

Painting flat roofs of homes and commercial buildings white would reflect more of the sun’s

heat back to space and reduce electricity used for air conditioning by as much as 15 percent, Chu told reporters today in London, citing research by Arthur Rosenfeld, a member of the California Energy Commission.

The administration of President Barack Obama isn’t planning any form of geo-engineering at present, Chu also said, referring to man-made ways to modify the climate such as injecting reflective particles into the atmosphere. At the same time, Chu said he favors regulations requiring paler roofs and roads.

“ Art Rosenfeld is pushing very hard for geo-engineering that we all believe will be completely benign and that is when you have a flat-roofed building, make it white,” Chu said. “It’s the equivalent of reducing the carbon emissions due to all the cars in the world by 11 years.”

For sloping roofs that are more visible than flat ones, Chu said paints known as “cool colors” are being developed. Those hues look like colors in the visible spectrum while reflecting a bigger portion of infra-red light, he said. Roads can also be made paler, he said.

“These are things where certainly encouragement along these lines could help,” Chu said.