



**Opening Statement (As Prepared for Delivery)**

**Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL), Chair**  
**U.S. House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis**

**Solving the Climate Crisis: Cleaning Up Heavy Duty Vehicles, Protecting Communities**  
**July 16, 2019**

Good morning and thank you for joining us. Before we begin, I'd like to say that we all share the sense of relief for Ranking Member Graves and his Louisiana community that the tropical storm did not cause more flooding or serious damage. New Orleans and Louisiana have had more than their fair share. As sea levels rise and as communities deal with heavier rainfall during storms, we must partner with local communities to ensure they can adapt.

We are all in this together. This Congress and this committee will always step up to help people who are hurt by disasters. We want to help communities become more resilient in the face of the climate crisis. For example, I visited Rep. McEachin's district last week in Virginia. We were impressed by the work being done at the local level to plan ahead for climate impacts and flooding, and they had many recommendations for us as they adapt.

Over the past several weeks, our committee has been examining ways to cut carbon pollution from the electric power sector. Fortunately, there is progress in the power generation sector, so much progress that the *transportation* sector is now our largest source of carbon pollution. And in recent years, it has been growing. More than 90% of the energy used in transportation still comes from fossil fuels. In the power sector, the ways to cut pollution at power plants and bring new clean energy sources onto the grid are relatively straightforward. But vehicles and industrial transport are different—cars, trains, planes, trucks, buses and ships all use different technology to move people and goods.

Today, we're focusing on heavy-duty trucks and buses in particular. There are two big reasons we want to start here.

First, low-income communities and communities of color are hit hard by air pollution from heavy-duty vehicles. That's because of the ongoing repercussions of the historical, racially discriminatory practice of redlining. The neighborhoods surrounding polluting facilities, including ports and busy highways, aren't rich. They're home to working people and people of color. Air pollution from these facilities causes asthma, lung cancer and other ailments. And it's a big reason that the zip code you were born in has such a powerful effect on your health.

Moving heavy-duty transportation to cleaner technologies can help address these ongoing inequities, improve people's health, and tackle the climate crisis.

Second, Congress can play an important role in deploying cleaner trucks and buses. Congress can fund state and local initiatives to secure clean technology and we can create new tax incentives for innovative technologies. Federal research and development can also bring new engine technology from the lab to the marketplace.

California is currently leading the charge to reduce pollution at its many ports and along highways. Three of our witnesses are based in California and will be able to describe this policy leadership in detail. For instance, when ships make it to the largest ports in California, they have to tap into shoreside power instead of running their engines. I saw some of this in action at Port Hueneme in Congresswoman Brownley's district a couple months ago.

The aim is to save money on shipping as well as to cut dangerous air pollution. Ports are also a test bed for heavy-duty truck technology, so the state is funding demonstration projects for zero-emission trucks that move goods from ships. And they're committed to transitioning public transit buses to zero emissions by 2040.

Additionally, we know that children are especially susceptible to air pollution. In fact, students are exposed to more diesel exhaust inside a school bus than the drivers in the cars behind the buses. So California is funding zero-emission school buses, which is something I think we should all be interested in given the importance of protecting children's health.

Finally, we're not the only country working on this technology. We're in a race with India, China and Europe. But with American ingenuity, we can grow our economy, protect our health and fight the climate crisis. It's an exciting topic because you just know that American can lead the world with well-paying jobs as we transition to clean energy.