

Opening Statement of Republican Leader Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing on “Charging Forward: Securing American Manufacturing and Our
EV Future”
March 8, 2022
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, to our witnesses, for appearing before the Subcommittee to provide your testimony.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply troubled by the focus of today’s hearing and by the failure of this Committee and the Biden Administration to address the gravest existential threat to Europe and the United States since World War II.

Our hearts are breaking for the people of Ukraine. Thousands are dying — women and children, men and boys. The Ukrainians are under constant assault, forced to shelter underground to protect themselves from Russian missiles raining down on them.

This crisis did not happen overnight. For years, Republicans have been sounding the alarm about Europe’s growing reliance on Russian oil and gas. Under my chairmanship of the Committee, we sought to maximize America’s energy abundance — producing more energy here at home and exporting the surplus to our allies overseas.

Today, America is the world’s leading producer of oil and gas — not Russia — and we are emerging as the world’s leading exporter of liquefied natural gas. Republicans and Democrats should embrace this fact, and use American oil and gas to deter Putin from continuing Russia’s bloody assault on democracy.

Putin felt emboldened to attack because Russia has a stranglehold on Europe’s pipelines and energy supplies, and he saw weakness in President Biden’s anti-fossil fuel agenda.

Under President Biden's leadership, we have watched U.S. oil production decline by over 1.5 million barrels per day, from the peak production of 13 million barrels per day in 2020. Investments in drilling, pipelines, and energy infrastructure projects have also slowed, while regulatory red tape and permitting delays pile up. Under President Biden, America's reliance on foreign oil has grown. In fact, last year, oil imports from Russia reached an 11-year high.

It is time we stand up to Russia's aggression and help our allies in Europe fight back by flooding the global market with affordable and reliable American energy.

We must act now. Gasoline prices — now over \$4 per gallon — are the highest in 14 years. Since America produces so much natural gas, the U.S. benchmark natural gas prices remain low and relatively stable; however, natural gas and electricity prices in Europe are surpassing all-time highs as fears grow that Russia will close the taps.

Here at home, people are struggling to make ends meet. Sadly, many are forced to decide whether they should put gas in the car or food on the table. In Europe, the situation is even more dire because there is a very real risk that they could completely run out of energy.

Mr. Chairman, with the global energy crisis and the war on Ukraine right in front of us, why are we holding a hearing on electric vehicles? Given that only the richest 1% of Americans are driving electric vehicles, the Committee should be focused on more pressing issues. Even Elon Musk, founder of the world's leading EV maker, understands that EVs should not be our main focus right now. Mr. Musk said over the weekend that the U.S. needs to increase oil and gas production immediately.

Republicans have proposed solutions to address the energy crisis and take on Russia. First, we must immediately surge U.S. oil and gas production and send

the unmistakable signal that America — not Iran or Venezuela — will step in to replace Russian energy that is taken off the market. Second, we should isolate Russia by sanctioning Russian energy supplies and cutting off their access to global markets. Third, we should modernize our energy infrastructure of pipelines, storage tanks, and export terminals so we can move products more efficiently and stabilize global markets.

Last week, Leader Rodgers and I sent letters to Secretary Granholm and Chairman Glick to urge them to immediately approve long-delayed LNG export authorizations and natural gas permits. Yesterday, I sent a letter to President Biden to urge him to end the importation of Russian oil and increase American production and exports.

These are important steps the Administration could take immediately that will send a strong signal to the world that America is ready to help. The world is looking for leadership right now and America has the opportunity to lead by replacing Russia as Europe's energy supplier.