

Opening Statement of John Shimkus
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
“Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy:
Solutions for Planes, Trains, and Everything Beyond Automobiles”
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As Prepared for Delivery

Today the Subcommittee turns to what is possible for decarbonizing transportation beyond automobiles and light trucks. This means aviation, shipping and ports, rail. It means the medium and heavy vehicles used in agriculture, industry, transit, and to move loads of all types on the highways and throughout every size community across the United States.

The transportation sector produces 29% nation’s carbon dioxide emissions, according to EPA. Medium and heavy vehicles account for just under a quarter of these emissions, which provides a large target for further emissions reductions.

These vehicles, which are powered mostly by diesel engines, also provide a large role in the economy of the United States.

According to the Diesel Technology Forum, heavy duty diesel engines were responsible for delivering \$4 trillion in economic activity in the first quarter of 2019. This includes agriculture, mining, construction, and transportation, and represents 12 percent of all private sector industrial activity.

Last year, more than one million new heavy-diesel engines were produced on American assembly lines and provide new, more efficient products for use in future economic activity.

In the transportation sector alone, diesel is most visible in medium and heavy trucking. Of the 14 million commercial trucks on the road, 75% are powered by diesel engines, 97% of the Class 8 tractor-trailer fleet runs on diesel. And, as the Forum and some of our witnesses this morning will testify, the quality of the new engines is providing large environmental benefits. Between 2010 and 2030, more efficient diesel trucks are expected to save some 130 billion gallons of fuel and 1.3 billion tons of CO₂—more than the emissions from all light duty vehicles in any given year.

This is particularly impressive when you consider that vehicle miles traveled in medium and heavy trucking is projected to increase. The Energy Information Administration projects that vehicle miles traveled just for medium and heavy commercial and freight trucking to increase by nearly 60% by 2050.

I raise these facts to underscore the point that getting to zero emissions in transportation will not be possible any time soon, and it will not mean the elimination of the diesel engine anytime soon.

There are a host of reasons for this: the availability, and performance of fuels and engines, the technological limits of efficiency improvements, the complex infrastructure for transporting goods, the affordability of new technology, capital costs and fleet turnover, the performance and logistical realities of each subsector, and the fundamental need for affordable, reliable engine power in every aspect of our economy and daily lives.

Congress has to be practical and realistic when it confronts environmental policies concerning the transportation sector. Setting unrealistic goals because it checks political boxes is not how you develop and ultimately enact successful bipartisan policies. 100 by 50, net zero emissions, clean energy economy, deep decarbonization — these are all tag lines, descriptions. Some may be workable, some may not be. But what's not workable or productive is legislating by tagline.

Instead of taglines, let's legislate by looking at whether policies will raise costs, lock in policies that constrict innovative opportunities, inhibit transportation and negatively impact not only commerce, but what people rely upon every day.

The good news is trends for improving transportation emissions are positive, as we will hear from industry witnesses this morning. We will also hear several witnesses talk about the on-going innovation and prospects for cleaner fuels and engines in transportation.

I would like to welcome in particular, our witness from the National Association of Truck Stop Operators, JP Fjeld-Hansen [Feld Hansen]. He can speak about the benefits of policies that focus on our existing energy infrastructure, on our renewable fuels policy, and on the innovation that is driven by focusing on the needs of consumers, in this case the trucking industry and the driving public.

Tim Blubaugh [Blue-ba] for the Truck and Engine Manufacturers Association will provide an overview about the success in reducing criteria pollutants and carbon dioxide emissions, and the investments and challenges to developing zero-emissions truck technologies. The testimony from Mr. Eckerle at Cummins, and Mr. Baines at Neste also highlight what is possible in other transportation modes.

This promises to be an informative hearing. I look forward to the testimony and to identifying what may be possible to do while preserving the essential roles of heavy-duty engine power in our economy and way of life.

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