

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
“Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for Planes, Trains and
Everything Beyond Automobiles”
October 23, 2019**

As Prepared for Delivery

Mr. Chairman, thanks for holding today’s hearing which seeks to review the challenges and opportunities associated with decarbonizing the U.S. transportation sector and focuses on the non-light duty portions of this sector.

And I very much look forward to the witness testimony, particularly from the several panelists who can speak to innovation in engines, fuel, and energy infrastructure this morning. There is a lot of underappreciated work towards cleaner engines and today provides a look at some of that work.

A couple of years ago, Daimler Trucks North America opened its high desert research facility and proving ground in Madras, Oregon, which I visited during construction. This track provides durability and performance testing that will be critical for proving new, innovative and more efficient technologies, and represents the constant effort by the industry to innovate, to make cleaner, more efficient engines, as well as

to make design changes in the vehicle bodies to improve energy conservation.

Reducing transportation emissions is a large, difficult, and complex topic—and one that impacts all Americans, especially those whose livelihoods depend upon the affordable and reliable delivery of products across the nation’s transportation systems.

Last Congress, Republicans worked closely with Democrats on this Committee to pass bipartisan legislation setting national standards for the development of autonomous vehicles. We agreed then that national standards would encourage investment in innovation in the U.S. in this important sector of the economy.

As important, I think we all acknowledged that this innovation would reduce highway accidents, save lives and increase fuel economy while reducing emissions. In fact, according the Energy Information Administration, by 2050 you could see a 44 percent reduction in fuel consumption among connected autonomous vehicles and up to 18 percent reduction among trucks.

The report says, and I quote, “In one representative platooning test two semi-trucks were platooned at a constant speed of 64 miles per hour

at a 36-foot distance. The configuration resulted in an average fuel consumption savings of 4.5% for the lead truck and 10% for the following truck.”

Unfortunately, that bipartisan work went up on the rocks in the Senate. Although it has taken longer than we like, I remain confident that the bicameral bipartisan staff discussions that have been ongoing for months will shortly produce substantial results. We can't miss this opportunity for the United States to lead on developing this technology and delivering safety and mobility benefits to all Americans, particularly our senior citizens and people with disabilities.

Meanwhile, the Administration has outlined a national policy that seeks to ensure people have the cars they want at prices they can afford, which will also enable a more rapid turnover to a cleaner, more efficient fleet. And at the same time, we had California seeking an aggressive and expensive, standard-setting scheme that would drive up the price of cars and trucks nationwide, slowing the turnover to cleaner emitting vehicles.

Republicans believe in putting the consumer first and encouraging American innovators to do what they do best: innovate.

In the run up to this series of hearings, we have [urged](#) our Majority colleagues to avoid resurrecting economically harmful, top-down regulatory policies that punish consumers with higher prices and fewer choices.

California frequently chooses this path and as a result of their cap and trade scheme, unique refining requirement and gas taxes, California consumers pay about 77 cents a gallon more per gallon than the national average. And they're not happy about paying an average of \$4.13 per gallon to get to work or take the kids to soccer practice.

Republicans support innovation, conservation, adaptation and preparation. We believe these policies have caused America to lead the world in carbon emissions reductions. We believe over-regulation and high taxation hurts consumers—especially low-income consumers—and can lead to economic stagnation.

In line with this principle, there are [bipartisan bills](#) Congress could pass today that will ensure the United States remains the global leader in emissions reduction, in economic productivity, and clean energy production. Bills that focus on what works for Americans and their economic interests and well-being.

Earlier this month, I expressed in a [letter](#) to Chairman Pallone, that we were encouraged by his expressed willingness to develop climate policies through a “collaborative process” that would “ensure every effected community, industry and stakeholder” has a seat at the table.

We eagerly await the opportunity to work together on these important policies to encourage innovation, conservation and adaptation. There’s so much we could do together in this space to help consumers and reduce emissions.

Today’s hearing will give us all an overview of more efficient, cleaner transportation systems. I am looking forward to realistic, practical policies that will be good for American consumers, our economy, and our environment.