

Chair Bill Johnson
Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials Subcommittee
Hearing: “Driving Affordability: Preserving People’s Freedom to
Buy Affordable Vehicles and Fuel”

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As prepared for delivery

Welcome to the Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Materials Subcommittee’s hearing on four pieces of legislation intended to safeguard economic freedom and mobility for the American people.

Our constituents across the country rely on their cars to commute to work, travel to and from school, check in on grandparents and loved ones, go to the grocery store, and go to medical appointments.

According to the Department of Transportation, approximately 280 million vehicles were registered to US drivers in 2021.

In total, 92 percent of US households have at least one vehicle, and more than half of US households have two or more vehicles.

The Biden Administration continues to release regulation after regulation to dramatically change transportation and mobility for Americans, on a timetable that defies reality. For many Americans this is pushing them toward vehicles that they cannot afford, and into vehicles that don’t make sense...especially for rural Americans like those in my district.

And who will pay for this so-called transition? The American taxpayer.

Luckily, Republicans on our committee have some solutions.

The four bills we are considering today stop the Biden Administration’s excessive overreach and enable Americans to continue to choose the cars they want and can afford.

First, the Preserving Choice in Vehicle Purchases Act was introduced by our subcommittee members, Dr. Joyce, Mr. Latta, Mr. Bilirakis, and Mr. Obernolte.

This legislation limits the EPA’s ability to unilaterally issue a waiver of national vehicle emission standards to California if the state’s policies directly or indirectly limit the sale or use of new internal combustion engine vehicles.

The intent of the Clean Air Act is clear.

Congress never directed California to dictate America’s vehicle emissions, and also did not authorize the EPA to force vehicles that the Agency does not like off the road.

Next we have The Fuels Parity Act, introduced by Dr. Miller-Meeks, which allows ethanol derived from corn starch to qualify as a renewable fuel and an advanced biofuel under the Renewable Fuel Standard.

The bill also supports the use of the Department of Energy's Argonne National Laboratory GREET (greet) model to assess lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.

We should prioritize nationally recognized standards rather than international standards that specifically disadvantage American fuels.

We also have two discussion drafts we are considering.

The first addresses one of the most egregious examples of the Biden Administration's regulatory overreach: the proposed creation of a program to introduce electricity into the Renewable Fuel Standard with eRINs.

I am encouraged that the EPA decided to pull back the eRINs program from the final Set proposal, but any Administration currently has the ability to re-engage on eRINs at a later date...so we need to address this.

Fortunately, the No Fuel Credits for Batteries Act, would clarify that the EPA is not authorized to create an eRINs program.

The second draft tackles another similarly disastrous proposal by the Biden EPA: the quote "Multi-Pollutant Emissions Standards for Model Years 2027 and Later for Light- and Medium-Duty Vehicles."

The Biden Administration's intent with the proposed rule was to pave the way for two thirds of new car sales and nearly half of new truck sales to be totally electric in the next 10 years.

To reach its goal, the EPA set emission standards that only electric vehicles could achieve.

The Choice in Automobile Retail Sales Act, or the CARS Act, prohibits the EPA from moving forward with this proposed rule.

The bill also prevents the EPA from issuing any regulations in the future that would mandate a specific technology or engine type.

All Americans deserve the freedom to choose what car they drive.

And to my Democratic colleagues, I want to emphasize that none of the bills being considered today prevent electric cars or trucks from being driven on our roads if people want them.

But forcing these vehicles on long distance driving rural Americans, and for that matter, many urban dwelling Americans, who don't have garages and driveways to charge these cars is simply wrong. Ultimately, this forced EV transition will disproportionately burden working class Americans.

The four pieces of legislation simply prevent the Biden Administration from using the federal government to dictate how Americans travel and reach their desired destinations.

I appreciate the witnesses for testifying today, and I look forward to our discussion on ensuring affordable and reliable transportation.