

Representative Mike Levin
Opening Statement
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Hearing on H.R. 3681
Thursday, February 27, 2020

Thank you, Chair Haaland, for including my Green Spaces, Green Vehicles Act in today's hearing and for giving me the opportunity to discuss the bill.

My bill would facilitate the adoption of zero-emission vehicles, known as ZEVs, by expanding charging infrastructure on public lands across our country and moving National Park Service and United States Forest Service fleets towards ZEV procurement.

The climate crisis is the defining challenge of our time. It is too late to avoid the effects of the changing climate – in fact, we are experiencing them already – but we still can avoid its worst impacts.

However, in order to do so we need to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2017, the U.S. Energy Information Administration released data showing that the transportation sector had become the largest source of emissions in this country, after the power sector had held that distinction for the previous four decades.

Light-duty vehicles make up nearly 60 percent of transportation emissions.

So, in order to make significant progress in reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, we need to be serious about addressing vehicle emissions at every opportunity.

I believe that means reducing our dependence on the internal combustion engine and replacing it with newer, cleaner technologies like electric and fuel cell vehicles.

For these ZEV technologies to be feasible, we need to develop a nationwide charging and fueling network that is accessible and easy for American drivers to use.

I appreciate the work happening in other committees to make this network a reality. It is vital that we on the Natural Resources Committee ensure Park Service and Forest Service lands are part of the network in order to increase the accessibility of public lands and reduce emissions associated with visitors.

ZEV infrastructure is also critical for the future of our public lands because our national parks are warming at two times the average rate of the rest of the country and could experience a temperature increase of somewhere between three and nine degrees Celsius by 2100.

For these reasons, I introduced the Green Spaces, Green Vehicles Act.

My bill would establish a Green Spaces, Green Vehicles Act Initiative as a collaboration between the Park Service, Forest Service, and the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

Under the initiative, the agencies would be authorized to form agreements with companies and non-profits to secure electric charging and hydrogen fuel cell infrastructure for Park Service and Forest Service lands, as well as adjacent lands.

The initiative would also help the agencies acquire zero-emission vehicles and shuttle busses for their fleets, and it directs them to develop a strategy to ensure more than 25 percent of agency vehicles are zero-emitting by 2030.

My bill provides annual funding for the initiative to be used for both vehicle and infrastructure acquisition, and also requires the Park Service and Forest Service to provide information to the public on the availability of ZEV charging infrastructure.

These actions will not only help combat the climate crisis, but also reduce criteria pollutants that impact almost all our National Parks.

The National Parks Conservation Association, which is providing testimony on our next panel, last year found that 95 percent of National Parks have significant air pollution problems.

This includes 85 percent of parks that have air so polluted that it is at times unhealthy to breathe.

While there are many drivers behind these air quality issues, the Green Spaces, Green Vehicles Act is certainly part of the solution.

Again, thank you Chair Haaland for holding today's hearing on my bill. I look forward to asking questions of our witnesses.