



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Haley Stevens (D-MI)
of the Subcommittee on Research and Technology

Subcommittee on Research and Technology Hearing:
Building a Workforce to Navigate the Electric Vehicle Future

May 20, 2022

Good morning. It is so exciting to be gathered here in Pontiac, Michigan at the Oakland County Commission Chambers. I'm delighted to host today's hearing and extend a warm welcome and thank you to my esteemed colleagues and our distinguished panel of witnesses. I'd also like to extend my gratitude to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for letting us use their space – and offer up my special appreciation to Oakland County Executive David Coulter and Commissioner David Woodward for their leadership.

We are here today to examine how to build a workforce to navigate the electric vehicle future. Michigan has been at the forefront of automotive innovation for decades. Not only did we put the world on wheels at the beginning of the 20th century with automobiles, but an entire innovation ecosystem sprung up around this transformative kind of mobility. And let's be clear, it was Michigan leading the way. As the first state to complete a border-to-border interstate in 1960, the home to the first four-way electric traffic light installed not far from here in Detroit in 1918. The first highway materials testing lab in the nation was opened in Ann Arbor in 1912. And General Motors produced the first modern electric automobile in 1996.

Now, our auto companies – Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, along with our remarkable supply chain – are leading the world in electric vehicle technology and the innovation ecosystems that are the very backbone of our Midwestern regional economy. As many of you know, chief among many priorities of mine is to champion our manufacturing economy and its workforce in the halls of Congress. I've sought to understand the challenges facing local manufacturers through what I call my Manufacturing Monday visits. Every week, I see the innovation in the electric vehicle space that is happening right in our own backyard. From Allison Transmission Facility's in Auburn Hills to Intecells reshaping battery manufacturing technology in Troy to One Next Energy in Novi. The opportunities are right *here*.

Not only has Southeast Michigan been at the forefront of this industry, but we also have the enthusiasm for the electric vehicle future from local leaders – hungry to become a part of the

solution to a cleaner environment. Communities like Troy, Royal Oak, Berkley, Canton, and Ferndale are taking great strides to be the early adopters needed to support the development and deployment of electric vehicle infrastructure. All of which will be fueled by Michigan's workforce.

Michigan remains the preeminent automotive manufacturing hub in our country. Our discussion today will focus on a vital element of continuing this leadership – the workforce. Because let me be very clear – we can develop the most cutting-edge battery technology in the world, but that innovation only translates into economic and environmental benefits through the work of talented men and women who make it happen on the factory floor.

Our panel today also includes representatives from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity as well as Macomb Community College, home of the Center for Advanced Automotive Technology, a National Science Foundation funded Advanced Technological Education Center. They are doing extraordinary work to prepare a workforce to power the electric vehicle future. Many auto workers have spent their entire career in the field and are experts at what they do. I'm happy to have the United Auto Workers here to discuss paths that ensure the transition to electric vehicles is good for the environment, and is good for workers. We cannot discount workers or see them cut them out of the deal. We cannot see Michigan plants close at the expense of new and proliferating technology. It needs to be the opposite: more work and better jobs, and something that can be led by our friends at labor.

Manufacturing electric vehicles is just one part of an electric vehicle future. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which I was proud to vote for and was signed into law in November, provides 7.5 billion dollars to develop the electric vehicle charging infrastructure with the goal of installing 500,000 public chargers nationwide by 2030.

To meet these goals, we will need a highly trained workforce capable of installing and maintaining these charging stations. Unfortunately, we may be faced with a shortage of these qualified electricians right when we need them the most. We have heard from stakeholders that in Southeast Michigan, about 35% of this workforce is retirement-ready and may leave in the next 5 to 7 years. I'm excited to hear more about the gold standard for training electricians in the EV sector, the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program.

There is a story to tell coming out of Southeastern Michigan that despite a pandemic and shutdowns and an at times stymied workforce, we never stopped. We never stopped responding to PPE shortages or supply chain disruptions facing American consumers. In fact, while the auto industry sourced and produced PPE and ventilators, we continued innovating electric vehicles and the products in demand around the world. Has it been easy with semiconductor/chip shortages? *No*. Do we still need to solve that problem: *absolutely*. But today, we are setting the stage from Oakland County. We will remember this hearing and the incredible words of our witnesses. What we discover, inquire and capture here today will not only be remember, it will

be etched into the Congressional Record as part of our ongoing legislative body of work. How will EV's shape our workforce and how will our workforce lead?

Before I introduce our witness, I'd like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter of support from Canton's Supervisor, Anne Marie Graham-Hudak, highlighting the importance of today's field hearing for local governments in Michigan. Her letter outlined the creative ways Canton is partnering with SEMCOG to apply for electric vehicle chargers funding through the bipartisan infrastructure bill and the workforce necessary to maintain and install chargers. I would like to thank her for submitting a letter and for her passion on this topic.