

ANDY LEVIN  
9TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

228 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4961

30500 VAN DYKE AVENUE  
SUITE 306  
WARREN, MI 48093  
(586) 498-7122

[www.AndyLevinHouse.gov](http://www.AndyLevinHouse.gov)

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TRADE

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-2209

### Congressman Andy Levin

#### Testimony for the Record: Members' Day Hearing of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

November 14, 2019

Chairwoman Castor and Ranking Member Graves: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Michigan's Ninth Congressional District as you consider policy ideas for reducing greenhouse gas pollution and ensuring our communities are resilient to the impacts of climate change. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to highlight the need for action on electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, on green transportation infrastructure more broadly, and on zero-net energy buildings.

#### EV charging infrastructure

As our nation's transportation sector has become increasingly responsible for overall greenhouse gas emissions, plug-in EVs—which have 54 percent lower lifetime carbon pollution than conventional vehicles—can help us reduce emissions and move us closer to climate sustainability.<sup>1,2</sup> Demand for EV chargers is only expected to grow in the coming decade: EV charging needs will rise from 6 billion kWh in 2020 to 53 billion kWh in 2030, and the number of chargers needed is estimated to rise from 2 million in 2020 to 13 million in 2030.<sup>3</sup>

We need to lead the world in protecting our environment, and that must include improving EV consumer experiences so that we may end our dependence on conventional vehicles. Range anxiety, charge times, and charging costs currently preclude the paradigm shift necessary for a

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2016). *Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks*. [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-01/documents/2018\\_complete\\_report.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-01/documents/2018_complete_report.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> NRDC. (2015). *Electric Vehicles Can Dramatically Reduce Carbon Pollution from Transportation and Improve Air Quality*. <https://www.nrdc.org/experts/luke-tonachel/study-electric-vehicles-can-dramatically-reduce-carbon-pollution>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

sustainable automotive future. To encourage our country's needed shift to EVs, I plan to introduce the EV Freedom Act, a bill establishing a network of EV charging stations at small businesses and other locations along the Interstate Highway System.

### **Green Transportation Infrastructure**

Transportation represents the largest source of greenhouse emissions of any sector at about 29 percent of U.S. emissions.<sup>4</sup> I believe we need to simultaneously tackle the climate crisis and our crumbling infrastructure by taking a big, bold step towards total transportation electrification.

Any effort to electrify our transportation infrastructure must include funding for roads, bridges, and rail, while also dramatically electrifying our public transportation systems. We need to require renewable energy generation that offsets energy consumed by the electrified infrastructure system we will build. All of this must be done in a manner that ensures we take care of American workers now, while securing the automotive and infrastructure jobs of the future. I am working on relevant legislation that will be responsive to the urgent need to create a green national infrastructure, and I look forward to partnering with this Committee on that critically needed effort.

### **Zero-net energy buildings**

In its 2015 Quadrennial Technology Review, the U.S. Department of Energy found that the buildings sector accounts for about 76 percent of electricity use and 40 percent of all U.S. primary energy use and associated greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>5</sup> The report also found that the implementation of the best available energy efficiency technologies in the nation's current building stock would reduce commercial energy consumption by 46 percent.<sup>6</sup>

As a former clean energy entrepreneur, I have seen first-hand the potential to address our climate crisis through solutions that produce more efficient commercial buildings while also spurring cost savings and job growth. I believe we must move much faster with respect to the efficiency of both current and new building infrastructure, which is why I support requiring that all new buildings, including small businesses, be zero-net energy—i.e., new buildings should produce as much energy as they consume. To achieve this rapidly, we must increase our investments in grant programs that establish or expand financing for small business energy efficiency projects. Such investments will help us reduce our carbon footprint, create jobs, and move towards a cleaner, stronger economy.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2019). *Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Energy. (2015). An assessment of energy technologies and research opportunities. Quadrennial Technology Review. <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/03/f34/qtr-2015-chapter5.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

I respectfully request that the Committee bear these priorities in mind when determining appropriate courses of action that promote sustainability for our communities and our environment. Climate change poses an existential threat to humanity, and we will not have to wait for sea levels or temperatures to rise even further to feel that impact – it is making us less safe right now. Even the Department of Defense just this year said, “the effects of a changing climate are a national security issue with potential impacts to DOD missions, operational plans and installations.”<sup>7</sup> If we do not act urgently and boldly, we will have shirked our solemn responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the American people.

Again, I thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you.

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<sup>7</sup> Tony Capaccio, Jennifer A. Dlouhy and Ari Natter. Time. (2019). *Defense Department Warns About Climate Change Impacts to Armed Forces and Bases*. <https://time.com/5507465/climate-change-impact-armed-forces-bases/>