

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Hearing on, “Charging Forward: Securing American Manufacturing and Our EV Future”

March 8, 2022

Today, the Committee is examining the ongoing transition to electric vehicles that is good for consumers, our economy, and our environment. Thanks to passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law last November, we have the historic opportunity to charge forward on EVs.

This investment comes at a time when Americans are facing sticker shock at the gas pump. Russian President Putin’s premeditated invasion of Ukraine is driving up gas prices all around the world. These prices remind us, yet again, that we must kick our oil habit and free ourselves from the price volatility of fossil fuels. If we want to reduce Putin’s power – as well as the power of all the oil companies that are currently pocketing record profits while American families suffer – then we need to double down on alternatives, not on the same old failed policies of the past. It’s why I’m pleased to hear that President Biden will soon move to ban Russian oil imports. This action is necessary considering that Shell could not resist the temptation of profiteering off of a cheap Russian oil purchase last week. This is the right thing to do, and I commend the President for taking this action.

The transition to EVs is one of the ways we can save consumers money at the pump, and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law makes EVs more convenient and accessible for all Americans. The law invests \$7.5 billion in electric vehicle charging infrastructure along our nation’s highways and communities so that consumers are able to reliably power their cars all across the country. It also includes \$6 billion for domestic manufacturing and processing of EV components like batteries and charging equipment. This funding will strengthen American manufacturing and ensure more of these components are made right here in America rather than in China.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law makes necessary and urgent investments in our future so that we can out compete any other nation. Thanks to President Biden’s leadership, manufacturing jobs are returning to America. Since the President took office, the economy has created 7.4 million new jobs, 367,000 of which are in manufacturing. Our hard work is paying off, but we must keep moving forward.

Fortunately, nearly every week, there are announcements of new EV and battery factories being built throughout the nation. Companies like Ford, General Motors, and Tesla are making investments across the country. These investments are occurring in traditional automotive manufacturing states like Michigan, but also in new, emerging manufacturing hubs in the Southeast. Domestic EV sales nearly doubled in the last year and the auto industry has clearly seen the writing on the wall. Consumers want EVs, and the industry is delivering.

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Unfortunately, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are using Putin's tragic and illegal war in Ukraine to promote the same old oil and gas policies they've been pushing for years. The lesson from Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not that we need to drill more. America is already the largest oil and natural gas producer in the world and yet that has not protected us from global oil shocks.

No matter how much we drill, our reliance on fossil fuels makes us weaker, subject to the whims of dictators and foreign adversaries, and vulnerable to global supply and demand disruptions.

Now, our EV investments will not lower prices at the pump for all consumers today, but neither will Republican efforts to force open more public lands to drilling, especially when oil companies are already sitting on some 9,000 unused drilling permits.

We need to work together and find ways to take reasonable and responsible actions that will lower fuel prices for consumers today. But it is also critical, in this moment, to ensure we are making smart investments to usher in the post-oil era as quickly as possible.

I am proud to have voted for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and believe we must continue to invest in EV infrastructure now. EV drivers need to know that they will have reliable charging options and that they will enjoy the experience of driving electric vehicles. We must also make sure that the transition to the EV future is equitable, and the industry can help do that by employing people from all communities.

Our witnesses today are part of this historic shift towards electrification. I look forward to hearing about their work in the EV transition, and how the investments in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will further support this growing domestic industry.

Thank you.