

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement**

**of**

**Subcommittee on Environment Ranking Member Paul D. Tonko**

***Sharing the Road: Policy Implications of Electric and Conventional Vehicles in the Years Ahead***

**May 8, 2018**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to our witnesses for joining us this morning.

Much like this Subcommittee's Future of Transportation Fuels and Vehicles hearing in March, the assembled panel represents a good overview with diverse perspectives on today's issue: the current state and future of electric vehicles.

In recent years, despite more options for fuels and improvements in fuel economy, transportation has become the leading source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.

Greenhouse gas reductions are occurring much more quickly in the power sector.

It has become clear that shifting transportation emissions into electricity generation is not only an effective, but a necessary, means for our country to make major strides to address climate change.

EVs will continue to become cleaner as the nation's electricity supply moves towards more low- and zero-emissions energy resources.

This has already been recognized by countries around the world. So it is my belief that electric vehicles are not only essential, they are inevitable.

But we do not need to look as far as China or Europe to see the desire to promote EVs. Cities and towns across the country are launching smart community projects, many including EV charging sites, to make their communities more connected and efficient.

I expect we will hear about the benefits of EVs, chief among them the opportunities to improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and save consumers from fuel costs.

Despite these benefits, it is important to acknowledge that the internal combustion engine is not going to disappear overnight. In the Subcommittee's previous hearing, we heard estimates of how long it might take for the nation's vehicle fleet to turnover.

Even with a growing adoption rate of EVs, conventional vehicles will remain a staple of our vehicle fleet for decades to come.

Today, we should hear about a few aspects of the future of electric vehicles.

First, what is the state of EV technology development?

In part due to investments by the Department of Energy, in recent years, batteries' costs have declined and their effectiveness have improved dramatically.

According to DOE's 2016 Revolution Now report, the cost of EV batteries produced at high volume decreased by 73 percent between 2009 and 2016.

Automakers are now offering many more vehicle options with ever-increasing ranges at a variety of price points.

Continued federal investments in R&D could unlock the next big breakthrough in fast charging, battery capabilities, or vehicle-to-grid smart technologies.

Second, what barriers still exist to broader EV adoption?

These may include increasing consumer education and acceptance, deploying new charging infrastructure, and addressing regulatory hurdles.

Regulatory action often lags behind technology. This has been true of charging infrastructure, which has outstanding questions about where to build it, who can own it, and how to ensure broad public access at affordable rates.

Some of these questions will be determined by state governments and PUCs, such as the development of off-peak charging rate structures, but clearly there are things Congress can do to incentivize EV purchases and infrastructure buildout.

Finally, where are we heading?

The trends are positive for greater EV adoption.

I want to highlight a portion of Ms. McKernan's testimony. And I apologize for spoiling it, but what AAA ("*Triple A*") has identified is worth mentioning more than once.

Between 2017 and 2018, there were pretty significant shifts in an increasing number of Americans that want to buy electric for their next vehicle and a decreasing number of Americans concerned about access to charging locations, which is still the biggest concern for buyers.

It is clear, that even in a short amount of time, consumer acceptance is growing and range anxiety is beginning to decline.

My guess, based on the trends, is that concerns over range, charge time, and price will continue to decline, especially as more infrastructure is built to support the growing EV fleet.

Perhaps the most important trend, which outside of Congress' control, is that many other countries have already set ambitious EV goals. Some are even proposing to ban internal combustion engines entirely in the decades ahead.

EVs will be heavily utilized around the world, which is why I believe this transition is inevitable.

It is my hope that our federal R&D investments continue to support the research, design, and manufacture of EVs here, in the U.S., in the face of increasing global competition and market opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that cleaning up our transportation sector is important regardless of our vehicle and fuel mixes. That means improving fuel economy, developing new, low-emissions liquid fuels, such as advanced and cellulosic (*"cell-you-loss-ick"*) biofuels, and deploying a much greater number of electric vehicles.

If we continue to identify and address barriers, I am certain EV adoption will increase substantially.

So I look forward to hearing more about the current state of EVs as well as what federal, state, and local policymakers can do to continue to incentivize adoption to ensure that the trend of greater EV deployment continues. Thank you. I yield back.