**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement**
**of**
**Subcommittee on Environment Ranking Member Paul D. Tonko**

***The Future of Transportation Fuels and Vehicles***

**March 7, 2018**

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding today's hearing on the future of our nation's transportation fuels and vehicles.

And thank you to all our witnesses for being here. Mr. Chairman, I want to commend you on assembling an expert panel that can inform Members of ongoing trends and impending changes to our nation's transportation sector.

It is beyond a doubt that our transportation sector is changing. The mix of vehicles and fuels will be considerably different in 2050 than it is today.

It will almost certainly be more diverse and cleaner.

There are many benefits to reducing dependence on petroleum, from improving national energy security to protecting consumers against the price volatility of the global oil market.

But the transportation sector is also key to addressing climate change. Vehicle-miles traveled in the U.S. has continued to grow since the Great Recession. And greenhouse gas emissions from transportation now exceed emissions from the power sector.

It is clear that effective climate action needs to consider how to reduce transportation emissions.

Reducing emissions in the power sector has occurred much more quickly and can be done more cheaply, which is why electrification of transportation has become a priority for achieving emissions reduction goals.

In recent years, improvements in electric vehicles have been impressive, including: reductions in battery costs, increased range, and greater charging infrastructure options.

And increasingly, utilities are embracing the tremendous opportunity for increased electricity demand.

We can imagine an exciting future where vehicles offer the potential to balance loads on the grid as energy storage resources.

While impediments still exist for further EV deployment, we are trending in the right direction.

Despite the excitement around electric vehicles, we need to acknowledge that this transition is not going to happen overnight. The internal combustion engine will continue to make up a significant portion of our nation's vehicle fleet in the coming decades.

We should also acknowledge that electrification will be more difficult to penetrate certain liquid fuel markets, such as aviation, shipping, and potentially heavy-duty vehicles.

But we must make drastic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions immediately.

Therefore, we need a multi-track approach, backed by strong federal policies.

This means continuing to make significant R&D investments and provide tax incentives for electric vehicles, as well as supporting the growth of an advanced biofuels market.

Alternative fuels, such as biodiesel and compressed natural gas, can be cleaner options and displace dirtier fuels for heavy-duty vehicles, which is important to not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions, but also other hazardous air pollutants.

And regardless of the fuel choice, we should ensure that vehicles are using these fuels as efficiently as possible.

Undoubtedly, CAFE standards have played a role in development of technologies to improve fuel economy.

Unfortunately, EPA Administrator Pruitt is reconsidering the greenhouse gas standards for Model Year 2022-2025 light-duty vehicles and questioning whether the Agency's initial assumptions about technology development and costs from 2012 are still accurate and reasonable.

It is clear from the technical assessment, as well as the robust and conclusive public record, that these standards should be maintained.

They are feasible, can be met at lower costs than originally estimated, and can be achieved through a number of different technology pathways— many of which are already commercially available.

In addition to saving consumers at the pump, EPA projects that the Model Year 2022-2025 standards will reduce emissions by more than 230 million metric tons by 2050, and nearly 540 million metric tons over the lifetime of Model Year 2022-2025 vehicles.

Similarly, we know the Administration is considering whether or not to support changes to the Renewable Fuel Standard.

Like CAFE, this is an area that this Subcommittee has examined, and I would caution against unilateral action by the Administration, which may not benefit consumers, put us on the path towards reducing transportation emissions, or increase domestic energy security.

These federal policies, along with tax incentives, R&D investments, and state policies, are important pieces to shaping the future of transportation in our country.

Ultimately, other countries will continue to embrace electrification, low-emissions liquid fuels, and fuel economy. They realize that their air quality depends on these developments. And they recognize the threat of climate change is real and requires major commitments to reduce emissions from all sectors.

The U.S. should continue to lead and innovate, and ensure that our manufacturers, automakers, and refiners are able to deliver cutting-edge vehicles and fuels for the U.S. and markets around the world.

With that, I yield back.