

Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis Hearing
*Safely, Efficiently and Equitably: Transportation Solution to Move People and Goods in a
Decarbonized Economy*

Good morning. And welcome to today's hearing of the Senate Democrats' Special Committee on the Climate Crisis looking at the future of the transportation sector as we continue working to decarbonize our nation's energy economy in a safe, efficient, and equitable manner.

As I travel throughout my home state of Oregon, meeting with constituents and visiting local communities, I've witnessed first-hand the devastation that climate chaos is already causing to our planet. From the wildfire seasons that burn homes and business throughout the Pacific Northwest to ash growing hotter and longer year over year, to the more frequent and intense storms flooding towns and cities. From the acidifying oceans that are wreaking havoc on our fishing industries, to the spread of mosquito-borne diseases because warmer winters letting them spread further than ever before.

Robert F. Kennedy once said that "[I]f we fail to dare, if we do not try, the next generation will harvest the fruit of our indifference; a world we did not want – a world we did not choose – but a world we could have made better..." It is also said that we are the first generation to truly feel the effects of climate chaos, and the last capable of stopping it. We are here today because we are committed to do everything in our power to stop it.

Key to achieving that is the transformation of our transportation sector. For the last four years, this particular part of our energy economy has been the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions here in the United States. Since 2012, emissions from transportation have risen every year, and they are rising faster than any other sector at a time when we need to be drastically cutting emissions to avoid the worst impacts of climate chaos. In 2018 alone, it accounted for twenty-eight percent of emissions. And it's reported that in 2015, air pollution from transportation emissions contributed to the deaths of 22,000 Americans.

In addition to the impact that the transportation sector is having on our climate, we also have to consider the disparities that transportation inequities too often have on lives and the economy. These disparities are the result of decades of policy decisions that allocated resources to some communities at the expense of others. In far too many communities, predominantly low-wealth and communities of color, we have seen an underinvestment in public transportation and communities making it difficult for residents to get to job centers, healthy food or health care. That is why I have spent years advocating for a robust investment in our nation's infrastructure, including our public transportation systems.

The good news is that solutions to decarbonize the transportation sector are developing and many of us here in the Senate have been working hard to aid in these efforts.

Private companies have been producing and prototyping zero-emissions trucks and committing to becoming carbon-neutral by 2050. And there has been strong growth in the electric car sector as more and more Americans transition to them instead of their fossil fuel counterparts. To help push this transition along, Senator Whitehouse and I introduced the Zero-Emissions Vehicle Act two years ago to set a Federal Zero-Emissions Vehicle standard.

Communities like Portland, Salem, and Eugene in Oregon are working hard to replace their diesel-powered public buses with battery-powered electric ones, and I have gladly worked with them to qualify for federal grants so they could afford to get them. I also introduced the Community Health and Clean Transit Act to provide qualified transit districts with zero-interest loans for the upfront costs of transitioning to electric buses, as well as for the charging infrastructure needed to power them.

Ports in communities all along our coasts are working hard to make themselves greener and more climate friendly. Earlier this year, a number my colleagues and I introduced the Climate Smart Ports Act to help them make this transition by replacing cargo handling equipment, port harbor craft, cargo delivery trucks, and other equipment with zero emissions equipment and technology while also helping them develop clean energy microgrids to power their facilities and equipment,

But how do we expand and increase the pace of these developments? What is needed to allow people to work and shop closer to home? How do we improve accessibility to public transportation? How can we better incentivize the development of zero- or low-emissions cars, trucks, ships, airplanes, and fuels? How do we up our ambition before it is too late? Today, we will explore these and many other questions facing us in this effort, as well as the kinds of policies needed to not only transition this critical sector of our economy, but to do so in a fair and equitable manner.

And we are very fortunate to be joined by several panelists who will bring their expertise in such diverse fields as transportation justice, vehicle electrification, aviation climate policy, and heavy-duty emission reductions to help us work our way through these critical issues.

We have Vivian Satterfield from Portland, Oregon. As Director of Strategic Partnerships with Verde she helps her organization engage community members, peer organizations, and policymakers about the connection between protecting the environment and building community, while also advocating and organizing with low-income people and people of color to drive environmental resources into their neighborhoods in response to existing needs.

Also from Oregon, we have Jeff Allen, Executive Director of Forth. His organization brings together local communities, car companies, industry partners, utilities, and entrepreneurs to

demonstrate new technologies in real-world projects that help improve lives, expand mobility options, support business growth, create living-wage jobs and strengthen the economy.

Brad Schallert, Director of Carbon Market Governance and Aviation at the World Wildlife Fund, leading the organization's efforts to create sound climate policy for the aviation sector and ensure that carbon markets operate as an effective tool to address the climate crisis.

Finally we have Rachel Muncrief, the Deputy Director of the International Council on Clean Transportation where serves as a close partner to the Executive Director in the development and implementation of program strategies to eliminate the climate and health impacts of the transportation sector. She is an expert on heavy-duty vehicles.

Thank you all, very much, for being here with us this morning.