U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
# SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
## Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Valerie Foushee**
**of the Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight**

Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Hearing:
*Environmentalism Off the Rails: How CARB will Cripple the National Rail Network*

June 13, 2024

Thank you Chairman Obernolte, and thank you to our witnesses for appearing before the Subcommittee today.

Since joining the Science Committee, it has been my privilege to participate in hearings that have showcased the very best of the Committee's mandate to lead the way in advancing the breakthroughs and innovations of the future. This Committee works best when we set aside narrow and parochial thinking in favor of a broad and forward-looking perspective that allows us to dig deep into solutions to pressing scientific challenges.

With that in mind, I feel compelled to note that the subject of today's hearing has virtually no connection to the Science Committee's jurisdiction.We are here to discuss an environmental regulation at the state level that is directed at freight rail operations – none of which falls under the Committee's purview. It is my hope that after today's hearing concludes, we will refocus on the challenges and opportunities facing the Federal research enterprise. Still, I will always accept the opportunity to discuss the path forward for a low-carbon future and the health risks faced by environmental justice communities.

Diesel-powered freight rail operations are a significant source of air pollution, a notable contributor to climate change, and a major environmental hazard for frontline communities located around major railyards. The State of California, as a part of its obligation to provide clean air to its residents, aims to reduce these harms with the In-Use Locomotive Regulation. The rule requires the freight rail sector to adopt cleaner locomotive technologies in the coming decades, and it seeks to advance a transition to zero-emission rail operations that would mirror America's broader shift to a clean energy future. Fortunately, the state's action rests on a solid foundation in terms of public health, cost-benefit analysis, and technical feasibility.

The In-Use Locomotive Regulation would have sweeping public health benefits. According to CARB's modeling and analysis, the rule would reduce statewide locomotive emissions by approximately 7,400 tons of particulate matter and 386,000 tons of nitrogen oxide between 2023 and 2050. It would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from locomotives by 21.6 million metric tons. It would reduce hospital admissions and emergency room visits, and lead to 3,200 fewer

premature deaths. It would even reduce the cancer risk for communities located around major railyards by over 90% by 2045.

These statistics translate to real cancer rates dropping, real lives saved, and air that will be cleaner and healthier for millions of Americans. And despite the predictable complaints from industry, there is every reason to believe that decarbonizing the rail sector is realistic and achievable.

We don't have to take CARB's word for it: an independent, peer-reviewed 2021 study led by researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory made a similar finding, concluding that in the near future, "battery-electric trains can achieve parity with diesel electric trains" nationally in terms of cost. Based upon their analysis, these independent researchers further concluded that "retrofitting diesel-electric locomotives with battery-electric technology could save the US freight rail sector billions of dollars while yielding environmental, health, and grid-resilience benefits." Thus, the argument that zero-emission alternatives will not be available, and that their adoption would be prohibitively expensive, does not appear to reflect the best available science.

I hope today's discussion keeps in mind that real lives are at stake in the transition to cleaner freight rail operations. Frontline communities should not be forced to sacrifice their health – and their lives – because others are reluctant to invest in the technological solutions made available by a clean energy future. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.