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

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Energy Hearing:
The Next Mile: Technology Pathways to Accelerate Sustainability within the Transportation Sector
Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you, Chairman Lamb, for holding this timely hearing on how we can best accelerate the sustainability of our nation's transportation sector. I also would like to join you in welcoming this distinguished panel of witnesses to today's hearing.

This Committee recently held a hearing where we discussed the need for a national surface transportation agenda. Today's hearing expands upon our commitment to addressing the environmental impacts of transportation in order to mitigate its impacts on climate change and air pollution. While there are many exciting developments in sustainable transportation, such as electric cars, alternative fuels, and new concepts for mass transit systems, there are also many barriers to these technologies that we as a country must work to overcome. That's why this hearing is so important.

The transportation sector's carbon emissions are largely attributable to petroleum-based fuels. A transition to a mix of low carbon fuels and electricity could reduce these emissions by more than 80 percent and eliminate petroleum use almost entirely, according to the Department of Energy's Vehicle Technologies Office. While researchers believe that this is technically feasible with technologies that already exist today, further R&D will be critical to reducing their costs and improving their reliability and scalability to meet our economic, environmental, and mobility needs.

As I have stated before, my hometown of Dallas is a hub for air travel and freight – two forms of transportation that are particularly challenging to decarbonize. Those sources of emissions are projected to grow in coming years as the demand for travel and goods steadily increases. For example, emissions from aviation currently account for almost 3% of total global emissions. However, based on current aviation trends it could grow to above 4% by 2040, representing 14% of the transportation sector emissions. That number may sound inconsequential; but it is significant when you consider the amount of emissions we must reduce to put us on a path to limit global warming this century.

As I know we'll hear more about from today's panel, several of our National Labs and private companies are dedicated to providing solutions to these very challenges. But Congress must also

act and allocate low-carbon R&D funding to further drive innovation in this sector. So I look forward to this discussion, and to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, as we consider ideas to better support the Department of Energy's research and development activities in this crucial area.

Thank you and I yield back.