



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

Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

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

June 13, 2024

Good afternoon, and thank you to Chairman Obernolte for this opportunity to discuss how our shared home state of California is working to protect the health of our constituents. While this is not a typical Science Committee hearing, I'm glad it offers a chance for me to welcome Alan Abbs, from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Mr. Abbs and his colleagues work hard to address the harmful air pollution, including eradicating the use of leaded aviation fuel, in my district and beyond. California has unique challenges that worsen our air quality – we have major ports, increasingly intense wildfires, and stunning California geography which leads to an accumulation of pollution in mountain valleys. These obstacles are why the Clean Air Act allows California to seek waivers to go above and beyond federal standards to improve the state's air quality.

In November, EPA issued a policy change that explicitly allows California to seek an EPA waiver to issue locomotive-specific regulations. As EPA explained in its notice, this policy change aligns with the legislative intent of the Clean Air Act. I was glad to see this, because if California can't regulate locomotives, it leaves a huge gap in the protection of frontline communities. According to CARB's analysis, the regulation we're here to discuss today will reduce cancer risk around railyards by an estimated 90 percent.

It will result in 1,500 fewer emergency room visits and 3,200 fewer premature deaths.

Beyond those health benefits, this policy makes sense in cost-benefit terms: CARB estimates that the monetized health benefits outweigh the equipment and labor costs by over \$18 billion. That's a reflection of just how much the public would benefit from the shift to zero-emission rail alternatives in freight rail operations.

Any regulation that requires a change to the status quo is going to demand some up-front costs, so it's not surprising to see resistance from the railroad industry. Fortunately, there's good news for them on the affordability issue, coming from just outside my backyard. Researchers at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory led a recent analysis that concluded the switch from diesel to battery-electric locomotives could save the U.S. freight rail sector \$94 billion over 20 years in sector-wide net present value. And this technology isn't pie-in-the-sky – commercial

availability is projected within the next ten years. CARB took that timeline into consideration when choosing to phase in the requirements, with milestone options available through 2047.

I want to be clear – I think the Science Committee is an awkward venue for this particular discussion. I don't think my role as Ranking Member is particularly relevant to my support for state-level California regulatory actions. But regardless, some Science Committee tenets certainly hold true. The science behind the public health benefits is clear. This regulation will save lives, and I hope EPA follows the science in its consideration of granting the waiver. This is also a topic with a lot of exciting technology to highlight – this regulation will spur the adoption of state-of-the-art zero-emission locomotives as well as Tier 4 technologies that have been available for a decade. All of these modern alternatives are a drastic improvement over diesel engines, some of which have been chugging through our community, emitting harmful exhaust, for half a century.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today. I yield back.