

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement

Chairwoman Carolyn B. Maloney

Committee on Oversight and Reform Business Meeting

Committee Print to Implement Instructions Provided by S. Con. Res. 14, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2022

September 2, 2021

Today, we are holding a historic markup to implement key elements of President Biden's Build Back Better agenda. **I am proud that the Oversight Committee is kicking off the first markup of what will be one of the most important bills of our lifetime.**

This ambitious legislation will create jobs. It will cut taxes and lower costs for working families. And it will pay for this by finally making the wealthy and large corporations pay their fair share in taxes.

The Committee Print that we are considering today provides crucial funding to establish the United States as a leader in modern transportation and the green economy.

The Earth's climate is rapidly changing, and humans are the cause.

19 of the hottest years have occurred since 2000, and July of this year was the hottest month ever recorded. Extreme weather events are getting more frequent and damaging, posing a severe threat to lives and national security.

These are facts—not opinions. Facts. And we must take immediate action, because our window for avoiding the most catastrophic damage to our planet is closing rapidly.

The destructive impact of extreme climate change will not just affect far off distant islands or deserts. It will impact all of us in this room, and all of our constituents back home.

One of the most important steps we can take is to reduce the amount of carbon we put into the atmosphere. In 2019, the transportation sector accounted for 70% of petroleum used in the United States, and was the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions nationwide.

Transitioning to battery-powered electric vehicles—or EVs—will significantly reduce our carbon output. Adoption of EVs will also reduce our dependence on fossil fuels and allow us to transition to renewable energy sources.

This bill would make substantial contributions to electrifying the federal government's vehicle fleets, making the federal government a leader on climate change by building the fleet of the future.

The bill includes \$5 billion to enable GSA to purchase over 160,000 electric vehicles and build the infrastructure necessary to support them.

It also includes \$2.4 billion to help the Postal Service purchase many of its new trucks, known as Next Generation Delivery Vehicles, as battery-powered electric vehicles. Importantly, it will also allow the Postal Service to build the infrastructure necessary to charge these vehicles.

The benefits of these electric vehicles go well beyond the protection of our climate and human health.

Electric vehicles have been shown to cost on average 20 to 25% less over the life of the vehicle as a result of reduced fuel and maintenance costs. This will save the federal government billions of dollars over time, making EVs a sensible and cost-effective investment.

Electrifying our fleets is also a matter of keeping the federal government competitive.

Major companies from UPS to Amazon have announced their plans to adopt all-electric fleets. And numerous car companies from Volkswagen to Ford have made commitments to produce more electric models in the coming years.

EVs are the vehicles of the future. To continue purchasing gas-guzzling vehicles is not only bad for the environment—it is bad for taxpayers.

That's why I'm so proud that our bill provides an historic investment in electric vehicles. But that's not the only thing our bill does—not by a long-shot.

I am also proud that this bill would also fully fund the National Archives and Records Administration's request for resources to reduce the backlog in veterans records that built up during the pandemic.

This funding will help ensure that veterans can obtain the benefits and essential services they are entitled to after sacrificing for our country. **I know addressing this issue has been a bipartisan priority for this Committee, and I am thrilled that we can take this important step.**

The bill also will ensure that the investments in the Build Back Better Act are subject to rigorous, independent oversight. That includes \$25 million for the Government Accountability Office to examine implementation of the entire package, as well as funding for Inspectors General to oversee the purchase of electric vehicles.

I'm especially pleased that we've included dedicated funding for implementation of President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, a commitment to ensure that at least 40% of the benefits of infrastructure investments go to the communities most impacted by environmental injustice.

We visited one of those communities last week, at the Committee's roundtable in Queens, New York. For decades, that community and others like it have suffered from elevated rates of asthma, disease, and even death due to the combined emissions from dozens of dirty power plants. **Justice40 is intended to change that, and the implementation funding we are approving today will support the initiative in living up to its promise.**

I look forward to a productive and vibrant discussion today.

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