

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 Hearing Hearing on “It’s Electric: Developing the Postal Service Fleet of the Future April 5, 2022

I would like to start by acknowledging the important, bipartisan work that the Members of this Committee did on the [Postal Service Reform Act](#), which will be signed into law this week.

Today, I hope we can come together on another common-sense step: cutting our reliance on fossil fuels and saving money in the long-run by transitioning to an electric Postal fleet.

Just yesterday the U.N. issued a major [new report](#) warning that without immediate action shifting from fossil fuels, we will not be able to keep global warming to acceptable levels. This Congress must help the world avert a climate disaster by moving from gas guzzlers to electric vehicles now.

The Postal Service operates an aging fleet of roughly 230,000 vehicles – many of which need to be replaced. These old postal trucks are often unsafe, have high maintenance costs, and get terrible gas mileage at a time when we cannot afford to continue polluting our environment.

The Postal Service began the process of acquiring a new and improved fleet more than seven years ago. Last year, they finally selected a contractor, Oshkosh Defense, to build the Next Generation Delivery Vehicle.

The Postal Service signed a 10-year contract to order up to 165,000 vehicles. Under the contract, Oshkosh must provide either internal combustion engine or battery electric vehicles, in whatever amounts the Postal Service orders.

Unfortunately, the Postal Service has stated that only 10% of the vehicles it purchases under the contract will be electric, while the remaining 90%—up to 148,000 vehicles—will be gas-guzzlers. This is simply unacceptable.

19 of the hottest years on record have occurred since 2000, and July of 2021 was the hottest month ever recorded. Extreme weather events are getting more frequent and damaging.

One of the most important steps we can take now is to reduce the amount of carbon we put into the atmosphere by burning less oil and gas. Cutting our dependence on fossil fuels is also a national security imperative. With Russia using oil sales to fund its brutal war in Ukraine and Putin’s price hike hurting Americans at the pump, there has never been a better time to invest in clean energy.

This is why the Biden Administration is working to move the country beyond fossil fuels and meet our obligations under the Paris Agreement.

Transitioning to electric vehicles—using proven technology that is already on the road today—is a key part of that effort. And the Postal Service should lead the way.

Electrifying its fleet would also keep the Postal Service competitive. EVs cost less to fuel up and maintain

over the life of the vehicle. So buying EVs could save the Postal Service money over time, even if the sticker price is a little higher.

Major companies from UPS to Amazon have announced plans to adopt all-electric fleets—not mostly-electric fleets, but ALL electric. And car companies from Volkswagen to Ford have committed to ramp up production of electric vehicles in the coming years.

For months, the Postal Service claimed that it could buy no more than 5,000 electric vehicles with its current funds, a tiny fraction of its overall purchase. But after this Committee raised questions about the Postal Service’s environmental review, they changed their position, and announced that they were doubling the initial order of EVs to 10,000.

This is progress, but these EVs still are only 20% of the initial order. And according to the non-partisan Government Accountability Office, which is currently reviewing this matter, the Postal Service may be basing its estimate about the costs of EVs on faulty assumptions.

In their [written submission](#) to the Committee, GAO states that their preliminary analysis “raises questions” about these estimates. In particular, GAO found that the Postal Service used a gas price, \$2.19 per gallon, that bears no relationship to current prices, and predicted that maintenance would be more expensive for an electric vehicle than a gas vehicle—even though the evidence shows just the opposite is true.

And the Postal Service should also be doing more to buy more EVs now—including both “next generation” vehicles and commercially available, off-the-shelf models.

The Postal Service currently has \$23 billion dollars of cash on hand—the most in years. And the bipartisan bill I led with Ranking Member Comer provided \$50 billion dollars in financial relief over the next ten years. A small portion of those funds can be used responsibly to buy more EVs.

I also believe Congress should provide additional funding to ensure an all-electric Postal fleet, and this Committee approved that funding last year.

Finally, the Postal Service can reduce upfront costs for charging infrastructure by exploring partnerships with private companies as well as public-facing charging stations that could increase Postal Service revenue. President Biden’s bipartisan infrastructure bill also includes funding for a national network of charging stations, some of which could be located at the Postal Service’s 31,000 retail locations around the country.

Electric vehicles are the vehicles of the future. To continue purchasing gas-guzzling vehicles is not only bad for the environment—it’s bad for the Postal Service, and bad for its customers.

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