

**STATEMENT OF  
THE HONORABLE RAY LAHOOD  
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
HEARING ON AMERICAN CLEAN ENERGY AND SECURITY ACT OF 2009**

**APRIL 22, 2009**

Chairman Waxman, Ranking Minority Member Barton, and Members of the Committee, thank you for holding this hearing, on this important day for reflection on the environment, Earth Day, to discuss the draft American Clean Energy and Security Act. I commend you for the hard work you did to craft this bill and for your efforts to engage in a serious national conversation on the most effective ways to grow a clean energy economy, promote energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the environmental and societal impacts of climate change, and adapt to climate change.

The Obama Administration, including the Department of Transportation (DOT), considers a comprehensive energy plan that will generate millions of clean energy jobs, reduce our reliance on oil, reduce pollution, create more livable communities, and attack climate change, a major priority. Aggressive action to reduce the impacts of climate change is needed, and the U.S. must be a leader in the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The President has already announced a series of aggressive actions to lower greenhouse gas emissions. These actions include improving the fuel efficiency of automobiles, intensifying U.S. actions on energy efficiency and renewable energy through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, and asking Congress to pass comprehensive legislation to make clean energy the profitable kind of energy through a gradual, market-based cap on carbon pollution. These ambitious and far-reaching actions, combined with others outlined in the President's Energy and Environment Agenda, demonstrate a commitment from the White House to lead efforts confronting climate change.

The Department of Transportation has been and will continue to be a full partner in all of these efforts, as well as legislative efforts. This is essential because transportation sources are a significant contributor of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. and must be part of the solution. I look forward to working with you as we develop policies to address the transportation system in this climate change bill to assure that it is fully integrated with the federal transportation programs and works in concert with the other statutory duties that DOT has been given by Congress.

The President, like Congress, recognizes the vital role that DOT plays in improving energy efficiency and combating climate change and has challenged us to:

- make a major investment in building new high speed rail lines.

- transform the way transportation serves the American people by creating more choices and encouraging less carbon-intensive transportation.
- provide states and local governments with the resources they need to coordinate transportation planning with economic development decisions; and
- ensure that additional federal transportation dollars generate affordable transportation options for persons in the highest-need communities.

My department is working aggressively to implement these forward-thinking policies and other measures that will reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and improve the lives of Americans. I want to take a few minutes to describe some of our efforts.

DOT recently issued new fuel economy standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model year 2011 and is coordinating with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy to develop standards for 2012-2016. These standards will save billions of gallons of fuel and encourage the auto industry to use more fuel-efficient technologies that will ultimately save American consumers money.

DOT also is implementing new statutory authority to look at options for issuing fuel economy standards for medium and heavy duty trucks.

The reauthorization of DOT's surface transportation programs, which will expire at the end of Fiscal Year 2009, will provide additional opportunities for considering ways to improve our energy and environmental policies. An important element of the reauthorization should focus on livable communities. This means fostering pedestrian and bike-friendly communities, providing more transportation choices, and offering better access to jobs and housing. Transit-oriented, mixed-use development also has the potential to contribute significantly to the revitalization of downtown districts and offer an alternative to urban and suburban sprawl and automobile-focused commuting.

In addition, DOT has been studying both mitigation and adaptation of climate change over the last ten years. We have long recognized the importance of transitioning away from fossil fuels, improving vehicle technologies, and optimizing the transportation network to reduce fuel-wasting activities like idling in traffic.

Furthermore, as the stewards of investments possibly at risk from the impacts of climate change, we want to equip decision makers with the data and tools they need to ensure that our transportation infrastructure and systems can sustain sea level rise, changing weather patterns, and other potential long-term consequences of climate change. For instance, the Department has already issued a study alerting State and local officials in the Gulf Coast to potential changes in climate that could disrupt transportation services. The report stressed the need to take climate change impacts into account as transportation plans are developed and investment decisions are made. Subsequent phases of the study are intended to focus on risks and adaptation strategies for transportation decision makers in the Gulf Coast region and nationwide.

Additionally, DOT funds the development of alternative fuel technologies and deployment of alternative fuel buses, including hydrogen fuel cell buses, diesel-electric hybrid buses, and supports alternative fuels infrastructure investment for transit systems across the United States. The implementation of developing bus rapid transit technologies holds real potential for reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

The Department also has focused on efficiency beyond highways and transit. In aviation, we have begun to modernize the U.S. air traffic system, called the Next Generation Air Transportation System or NextGen, and have put energy and environmental concerns at the heart of the effort. NextGen will result in the more efficient movement of planes in the air and on the ground. We are in the process of setting up a research consortium this year focused on accelerating the maturation of lower energy, emissions, and noise technologies for aircraft and engines and advancing cleaner alternative fuels. We also continue to implement the NextGen program, which will result in the more efficient movement of planes in the air and on the ground, the use of less fuel and the reduction of emissions. FAA has partnered with manufacturers, airlines, and airports in the Commercial Aviation Alternative Fuel Initiative to significantly progress toward sustainable alternative fuels.

We have conducted an Aviation Climate Change Research Initiative to better understand the impacts of high altitude emission impacts. Additionally, in recognition of the global nature of aviation business, we are expanding international engagement on reducing aviation emissions by working with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), in coordination with the State Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, to influence how the international aviation community addresses this critical issue. Finally, through the innovative Voluntary Airport Low Emission (VALE) program created by Congress, the FAA funds low-emission airport technology, ranging from alternative fuel vehicles and aircraft ground support equipment to various infrastructure improvements like gate electrification to reduce aircraft emissions at the gate.

Likewise, the Maritime Administration is focused on the potential of new technologies to reduce the harmful emissions from marine diesel engines through cooperative efforts with the Environmental Protection Agency and the maritime industry on alternative fuels and reduced ship stack emissions.

All of these efforts reinforce DOT's commitment to tackling the climate change challenge, achieving America's energy security, and improving the lives of Americans.

Again, I commend you for all of the valuable work you have done in drafting the American Clean Energy and Security Act. The draft bill identifies concrete ideas for discussion and is an important step in solving the challenges we face in freeing ourselves from our dependence on fossil fuels and charting a new course on energy in this country. I also thank you for allowing me, on behalf of DOT, to join in the discussion.