



THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING

Statement of Rep. Edward J. Markey
“Constructing a Green Transportation Policy: Transit Modes
and Infrastructure.”
March 19, 2009

At the end of this year, the nation’s primary transportation legislation, the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* will expire. Congressional re-authorization of a surface transportation bill will occur at a pivotal time for the country, for Congress, and for climate. As Congressional leadership and the Obama administration continue to work toward goals of energy independence and fighting climate change, transportation’s contributions to global warming and the potential to improve climate conditions cannot be ignored. This is underscored by the 89 percent of Americans who believe that transportation investments should support the goal of reducing energy use.

The U.S. transportation sector is responsible for approximately one-third of our country’s greenhouse gas emissions. About 60 percent of these emissions are from passenger vehicles. The United States has four and a half percent of the world’s population and 30 percent of the world’s automobiles. 77 percent of Americans use a single passenger car to commute. But there are signs that the United States is moving in a new direction. Studies show that we are now driving shorter distances and taking mass transit in record numbers. Transportation legislation should respond to this public demand and support mass transit as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Such legislation should also look at all modes of transit. This includes the often-overlooked vehicle of our own feet. Biking and pedestrian policies are thriving in communities large

and small, urban and suburban, and as my colleague Mr. Blumenauer will tell you, sunny and rainy.

A discussion of climate change legislation and transportation reauthorization would be incomplete without examining transportation infrastructure policies and practices. This includes the materials used in our roads and bridges, the machines that move them and the people who build them. Transportation emissions don't start at the end of the tailpipe. Supporting lower-energy manufacturing procedures and recycling for common transit materials can help reduce every ounce of CO₂ from the transportation sector, along with fuel-efficient heavy-duty machinery. Renovating existing infrastructure to reflect low-impact design standards improves water runoff and can increase air quality.

Congress must re-route its approach to transportation policy. It must acknowledge the indivisible link between transportation and climate change by giving the public choices in transit. People should drive because they want to—not because there's no sidewalk leading to the train station, or because a city bus system does not expand to the suburbs. By doing this, transportation policy helps meet our President's environmental goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and put a stop to global warming. Congress can compound this environmental benefit by supporting low-carbon fuels, vehicle efficiency technologies, and actions that reduce the emissions inherent in our transportation materials.

In a few short months, a climate bill and a transportation bill will be presented to Congress. We must make sure that these bills reflect the transportation needs of the public and the environmental needs of the planet. Thank you.