

Opening Statement
Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Committee on Science and Technology
Examining Federal Vehicle Technology Research and Development Programs

March 24, 2009

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

Transportation needs innovation. The transportation sector is our primary consumer of oil, and is the second largest emitter of carbon dioxide in the country. The federal government must continue to support efforts in vehicle technology research and development. Transitioning from today's dependence on oil to tomorrow's clean energy economy holds enormous potential to for our economy, environment, and national security.

I'm delighted to have Mr. Thomas Baloga here this morning, Vice President of Engineering at BMW North America, located in the Fourth District of South Carolina. In the Upstate, BMW and the International Center for Automotive Research are working together to reinvent the car with innovation in hydrogen combustion and battery research and development.

Meanwhile, in the present, BMW employs about 5,000 at the plant and its suppliers employ over 17,000 in our region. Without BMW, we wouldn't have a claim on the transportation innovation future in South Carolina, and we are immensely grateful for the \$6.0 billion they have invested in SC - \$750 million of which is coming out of the ground new in an expansion to produce the new X3 alongside the X5 and X6.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how we can continue to encourage the partnership between federal R & D support and the vehicle industry.