

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HEARING

Hybrid Technologies for Medium-to-Heavy Duty Commercial Trucks

June 10, 2008

Statement of Subcommittee on Energy & Environment Ranking Member Bob Inglis (SC-4)

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

Transportation needs innovation. The transportation sector is our primary consumer of oil, and exhales more carbon dioxide emissions than any other source. The more we pay at the pump each week, the easier it is to realize the obvious benefits of alternatives to oil. It seems that rising oil prices rouse our attention to ways we could “do energy” a different way. This hearing is a case in point.

In previous hearings of this subcommittee, we’ve talked about reinventing the car. We’ve heard the economic, environmental, and national security benefits that will come from pursuing hybrid, battery, and hydrogen technologies to power tomorrow’s cars.

Today, we’ll hear from several experts that the medium and heavy duty commercial truck market needs the same innovative focus. Applications such as hybrid engines and battery-powered auxiliary systems promise a significant reduction in oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, but technological hurdles stand in the way of realizing those benefits.

I’d also like to thank Mr. Sensenbrenner for introducing draft legislation that would steer federal dollars toward research, development, and demonstration in the area of commercial truck hybrid technologies. I’d be interested to hear from our witnesses as to whether current oil prices are enough incentive for heavy truck companies to invest in these technologies, or if there’s still a necessary role for the federal government to assist in overcoming these technological hurdles.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on their perspectives of this legislation and any suggestions they may have to improve it.