

## Opening Statement

The Honorable Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI)

Hybrid Technology for Medium to Heavy Duty Hybrid Trucks

Committee on Science and Technology, Subcommittee on Energy and the Environment

June 10, 2008

New taxes are not the only solution to climate change. We need to focus on our economy as we work to reduce our emissions. We can over-regulate our businesses, cripple our economic development, and watch as China and India race past us—sputtering greenhouse gases along the way—or Congress can create incentives that encourage the development of new technologies that will reduce our emissions, foster economic development, and allow U.S. manufacturers to export their energy-saving technologies worldwide.

A honking motorcade of trucks around the Capitol last month flashed signs that read, “When Trucks Stop, America Stops.” Commercial traffic is truly vital to the American economy, and the fuel costs for trucks directly affect costs for all Americans. The additional price of their fuel raises the price of our food, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, waste removal, and other the goods and services. While our economy would not survive without them, trucks consume huge quantities of oil, which raises the cost of their business, increases our dependence on oil, and injects greenhouse gases into our environment.

The answer is not to burden these businesses, already strained by high fuel costs, with additional taxes for the carbon dioxide they release. Instead, we need to encourage the development and introduction of technologies that will reduce their fuel consumption.

The technologies we need already exist. Everyone has seen hybrid cars. This technology, which combines gas and electric motors for a powerful and efficient engine, is even more practical in trucks. Even though there are fewer trucks on the road, trucks use more fuel.

Utility trucks, for example, typically drive short distances to and from a work site, but sit idle for hours while on site. A plug-in hybrid truck would use less fuel getting to and from the site, and could operate without any fuel while on site. Ultimately a plug-in hybrid engine in a utility truck could use up to 60 percent less fuel.

Delivery trucks constantly stop and go. Hybrid engines excel at this type of driving because the engine can essentially turn off during short accelerations, while coasting, and when it is at a stop.

Developing these technologies will have benefits beyond fuel savings. By making our trucks more efficient, we will make our goods and services more affordable and become leaders in these new technologies. Like America, Asia is faced with rising fuel costs. Their trucking fleets, like ours, are currently powered by diesel. In Europe, the price of diesel has risen to nearly \$9 per gallon. This has led to a strike. Spanish trucks are currently holding a “snail protest,” essentially blockading the highways of Spain and Southern France by inching along the

road. Anti-protest demonstrators, fearing that food and other goods could become scarce, have rebelled violently by slashing trucks' tires and smashing their windshields. If American companies are the first to develop and commercialize these products, not only can we avoid a similar fate, we can export these technologies worldwide.

By helping American manufacturers research and commercialize new technologies, we can strengthen our economy, reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and lower our emissions. The legislation we will discuss today is a narrow example of how technology, not taxes, can solve our energy crisis. The legislation would accelerate research of plug-in hybrid technology in trucks by creating grants for manufacturers to build, test, and sell plug-in hybrid utility and delivery trucks. The Act would also encourage the Department of Energy to expand its research in advanced energy storage technologies to include heavy hybrid trucks as well as passenger vehicles. This bill will put plug-in hybrid trucks on the road and help advance research and accelerate commercialization of an important technology. I thank the Chairman for holding this hearing and the witnesses for lending their expertise to this effort.