



**THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND GLOBAL WARMING**

**Opening Statement for Chairman Edward J. Markey (D-MA)
Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming Briefing:**

**“Progressive Auto X PRIZE: How Entrepreneurs Are
Driving the Future of Jobs and Energy Security”**

Thursday, September 16, 2010

The United States possesses only 2 percent of the world’s oil reserves. We have 5 percent of the world’s population. Yet we consume 25 percent of the world’s oil. And we import much of that oil from countries that don’t like us very much. That is our weakness.

This weakness has turned American consumers into OPEC’s ATM. Today American consumers spend more than half a billion dollars a day to buy foreign oil. That is half our trade deficit.

Our dependence on oil distorts our foreign policy, skews our military policy, wrecks our economic policy, and damages our environment.

Every \$1 dollar increase in the price of oil provides an additional \$1.5 billion dollars to Iran each year. Our oil addiction is supporting rogue nuclear programs. It is helping to funnel resources to terrorists.

But the dangers of our oil economy aren’t just from unstable regimes in the Persian Gulf.

This summer, BP’s uncontrolled well spewed upwards of 60,000 barrels a day of oil into our Gulf of Mexico.

All that oil, which covered beach, marshes and wildlife. All that oil which put fisherman out of work and crippled the tourism industry. All that oil, over 4 million barrels of oil, amounts to just 6 hours of oil use in the United States.

We can not drill our way to energy independence, we must innovate and build the path to a clean energy future.

Whether it’s the gusher of dollars sent to petro-dictators, or the oil gusher at the bottom of America’s ocean, the time to end this destructive addiction to oil is now.

The panel today is working to end this addiction to oil, 100 miles at a time. They are the winners of the Progressive Automotive X Prize.

The X PRIZE Foundation is an educational nonprofit organization, a public-private effort whose mission is to create groundbreaking new technologies that benefit humanity and inspire the formation of new industries, jobs and the revitalization of markets.

This competition focused on building new high-efficiency cars that reach 100 MPG. Today was the conclusion of the 31 month long contest to build a production-capable vehicle that can achieve this goal.

For six years, and three different sessions of Congress, I fought to increase our fuel economy standards. Finally, under the leadership of Speaker Pelosi, we were able to boost fuel economy from 25 MPG to 35 MPG. This was the first mandated fuel economy increase in 32 years.

We can not wait 32 years to go from 35 MPG to 100 MPG.

A recent study found that by transitioning to electric vehicles, we could create 1.9 million new jobs by 2030, we could improve our trade deficit by \$127 billion dollars a year, and the typical U.S. household would pocket almost \$4000 extra dollars in gasoline saved and other benefits.

In Congress, we are working to advance oil saving technology. The Waxman-Markey bill includes \$20 billion dollars and other measures to deploy plug-in hybrid and all-electric vehicles and has other provisions to help save oil.

Earlier this year I introduced bi-partisan legislation, the Electric Drive Vehicle Deployment Act of 2010. This bill will demonstrate the viability of electric vehicles and accelerate their deployment around the country. Most importantly, it reorients our energy policy towards our strength: innovation and technology.

We look forward to hearing from the X Prize winners today. Consumers are eager to learn how soon these 100 MPG vehicles can get from your garage to their driveways.