

Statement of Chairman John Shimkus
Environment Subcommittee
Hearing on “Discussion Draft: The 21st Century Transportation Fuels Act”
December 11, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning and thank you all for being here. Given the large number of witnesses, and in the interest of maximizing time for questions and discussion, I will keep my opening as brief as possible and welcome others to do the same.

Over the last two years, many of you have heard me say transportation fuels legislation was one of my ‘reach goals’ this Congress. To that end, interested Members participated in three stakeholder roundtables to get this conversation started, and the Environment Subcommittee held five hearings to further explore the future of transportation fuels. I want to thank Chairman Walden for not just allowing but *encouraging* this effort, I also want to thank the witness before us today who all actively engaged in those roundtables and hearings, and I especially want to thank Congressman Flores who co-authored the resulting discussion draft with me.

Rather than looking at individual federal transportation fuel policies on their own, the draft 21st Century Transportation Fuels Act takes a wider view of those policies and considers how they might work together to bring more value to consumers and more certainty to stakeholders. The draft would transition from blend-specific mandates to performance-based standards for future fuels and vehicles, remove long-standing barriers to the availability and usability of higher ethanol blends, provide an additional decade of certainty for advanced biofuels, and harmonize EPA and DOT vehicle efficiency programs.

The need for this type of comprehensive reform is timely. Stakeholders on all sides of this debate have been whipsawed for months by rumored and actual administrative actions, and that uncertainty will only increase after 2022 when EPA receives even broader discretion to set biofuel blending requirements. In fact, given EIA projections of declining liquid transportation fuel demand, it’s difficult to envision a post-2022 scenario in which biofuel volumes would not actually be *lower* than they are today.

I look forward to a constructive dialogue about what the future holds as well as what the discussion draft would mean for the various stakeholders. And with that I yield the remainder of my time to Mr. Flores.