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## ICC Policy Session Furthers Electric Vehicles Discussion

Chicago, IL –On January 8, 2020, the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) held a policy session entitled: *Electric Vehicles (EVs): The Beneficial Electrification of Transportation* to further explore the integration of electric vehicles across the nation and Illinois. Hosted by Commissioner Maria Bocanegra, the three-panel policy session garnered a great deal of interest, with attendees from across the country and across many sectors and industries.

“Nationally, the discussion of electric vehicles is evolving into a holistic conversation addressing topical issues such as carbon reduction goals, workforce development, environmental equity, deployment and integration, intra-agency planning, fleet transitions, right-to-charge laws, and regional transit coordination. Our expert panelists, representing a variety of sectors, presented us with new viewpoints and information on how other states and public utility commissions are approaching electrification,” said Commissioner Bocanegra.

The first panel, *National Outlook & Perspectives: The Current EV Policy Landscape, Initiatives and Considerations*, included Britta Gross, Managing Director for Mobility (Rocky Mountain Institute); Daniel Bowermaster, Electric Program Manager for Electric Transportation (Electric Power Research Institute); and Nick Nigro, Founder (Atlas Public Policy), and Senior Advisor (Alliance for Transportation Electrification).

“The energy and automotive sectors are facing one of the most significant transitions in history as cars, trucks and buses become electrified,” stated Gross. “I applaud the leadership shown by Commissioner Bocanegra and the ICC in convening such a large group of expert stakeholders to ensure a rapid and successful transition to electric vehicles in Illinois.”

During the discussion, the panelists explained that transportation is the largest carbon-emitting sector in the US. Because 59% of U.S. transportation emissions come from light duty vehicles, the only way to reach carbon-reduction goals is through greater electrification of the light-duty vehicle sector. The panelists agree that affordability, improved access to charging infrastructure, policy changes and awareness are key to growing the EV market. They highlighted state regulations, pilot programs, and investments for promoting the growth of EV charging infrastructure, developing EV-ready building codes, and electrifying transit systems.

“I was happy to participate in this important discussion in Illinois. The state has an opportunity to lead on transportation electrification and encourage more investment throughout the Midwest, a vital region to the U.S. economy. This event got 2020 off on the right foot and I’m excited to see where things go from here,” said Nigro.

Experts on the second panel, *Driving Forward in the Public Interest: How Demand, Fleet Investments, and Deployment Shape EV Integration*, were Alexander Keros, Lead Architect for EV Infrastructure (General Motors); Kate Tomford, Senior Analyst for the Finance Department (Chicago Transit Authority); and Phil Jones, Executive Director (Alliance for Transportation Electrification).

Panelists agreed that moving toward electrification is more like a marathon than a sprint, and for broader EV adoption there must be greater public buy-in. Keros told the Commission that charging an EV should be as easy as charging a cell phone, and that auto manufacturers are working to improve range, affordability, performance, and form of electric vehicles. Regarding mass transit, Tomford told the Commission that 33% of U.S. transit buses are committed to convert to zero emissions by 2045 with the CTA planning for 100% electric buses by 2040. The CTA is expected to grow its fleet of electric buses from 2 to 25 electric buses in the next year. Additionally, Jones encouraged the Commissioners to consider the integral role regulation will play in EV integration.

The third panel, *Transforming our Communities: How EVs Promote Carbon Equity, Grid Resilience and Development of the Future Workforce*, included Dr. Elizabeth Kócs, NREL Executive Energy Leader 2019 and Director of Partnerships & Strategy (UIC Energy Initiative); Christie Hicks, Senior Attorney (Environmental Defense Fund); Tim Drea, President (IL AFL-CIO); and Mike Raikes, Business Manager/Financial Secretary (IBEW Local 197).

This panel focused on the impact of electrification on the grid, planning for growth, the societal benefits to EV adoption and job creation opportunities. Dr. Kócs reiterated the need for increased investment in EV charging infrastructure to promote growth in the EV market, economic development, and a cleaner more efficient grid. “UIC has championed efforts in developing a framework on planning for EVs which promotes economic value stacking through job creation and new business opportunities, encourages collaboration to benefit stakeholders, and supports connections across societal, health and equity frames,” stated Dr. Kócs.

“Illinois workers are ready and eager to embrace new and cleaner electric vehicle technology to leave our kids a better world in which to live. However, Illinois also needs to invest in the Illinois work force to ensure good middle-class jobs are protected and allowed to thrive,” said Drea.

“The environmental, health and economic impacts of electrifying trucks and buses are tremendous, especially for communities that are historically climate- and energy-burdened. We encourage Illinois to maximize the benefits of transportation electrification in every corner of the state by taking a holistic approach to clean energy,” said Hicks.

Presentations from the policy session’s expert panelists are available for public viewing by clicking [here](#).

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