

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-6051

<https://oversight.house.gov>

September 26, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

We are alarmed by recent reports of your four-day summer 2023 electric vehicle (EV) road trip apparently intended to showcase the Biden Administration's progress in achieving a radical green agenda.¹ Using an internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicle, your Department of Energy (DOE) staff blocked off an EV-only charging station so you could stay on a schedule which was "painstakingly mapped out ahead of time" because of limited, slow, and nonworking EV chargers along your route.² In "sweltering" Georgia heat,³ your staff's actions caused a family with an infant child and low charge on their EV battery to call the police out of urgency while waiting at this charging station.⁴ You ultimately blamed your staff for "poor judgment" while testifying about preventing other EV vehicles from charging.⁵ This taxpayer-funded publicity stunt illustrates yet again how out of touch the Biden Administration is with the consequences of policies it has unleashed on everyday Americans.⁶ Committee Republicans remain committed to preserving freedoms like vehicle consumer choice in the face of an unproven, burdensome, and expensive Biden Administration push to force all Americans to buy EVs.⁷ We request documents and information to understand the purposes, costs, and consequences of your summer 2023 EV road trip.

¹ Camila Domonoske, *Electric cars have a road trip problem, even for the secretary of energy*, NPR (Sep. 10, 2023).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ Thomas Catenacci, *911 call reveals chaotic scene as Biden's energy secretary hogged EV charger for photo-op*, FOX NEWS (Sept. 12, 2023).

⁵ *An Update on the Department of Energy's Science and Technology Priorities, Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Science, Space, and Technology, S. Comm. on Investigations and Oversight*, 118th Cong. (Sep. 14, 2023) (statement of Jennifer Granholm, Sec'y of Dep't of Energy).

⁶ X, Scott Lincicome @scottlincicome, (Sep. 10, 2023, 12:36 PM), available at <https://twitter.com/scottlincicome/status/1700911024017133707/>.

⁷ See *Driving Bad Policy: Examining EPA's Tailpipe Emissions Rules and the Realities of a Rapid Electric Vehicle Transition, Hearing before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, S. Comm. on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs*, 118th Cong. (May 17, 2023); *Clearing the Air: Examining the Environmental Protection Agency's Proposed Emissions Standards, Hearing before the H. Comm. on Oversight and Accountability, S. Comm. on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs*, 118th Cong. (June 21, 2023).

Your summer 2023 EV road trip was reportedly “intended to draw attention to the billions of dollars the White House is pouring into green energy and clean cars.”⁸ Yet at every point on this journey, you relied upon ICE vehicles using gasoline to try to boost the charade of the effectiveness of green energy.⁹ This included using an ICE vehicle to block the aforementioned family and others from using EV chargers in Grovetown, Georgia.¹⁰ According to *NPR*, DOE staff and Secret Service used ICE vehicles while supporting your EV “caravan.”¹¹ Your fleet of EVs could not complete the trip without the support of the fossil fuel industry which you and the Biden Administration have been intent to vilify and destroy.¹²

Traveling from Charlotte, North Carolina to Memphis, Tennessee, you encountered significant EV implementation hurdles.¹³ *NPR* reported the trip route lacked fast, reliable, and available chargers—all factors essential for navigating work traffic, emergencies, inclement weather, and personal use.¹⁴ Your staff pontificated “...you have to stop for lunch anyway, so you stop, charge, keep going.” Yet stopping for lunch is often not long enough for an EV to charge fully.¹⁵

You and your staff did not even make serious, practical decisions on the EV vehicles chosen for the road trip. DOE avoided any use of Tesla vehicles or technology, which automakers who have invested billions in green energy are embracing.¹⁶ The *NPR* reporter on your road trip lauded, “Tesla chargers are significantly better than the competition, and most of the electric vehicles in the U.S. are Teslas.”¹⁷ DOE’s exclusion of Tesla from your EV road trip raises questions whether the decision was politically motivated.

Further, your road trip preceded the Biden Administration’s “most aggressive move yet” on the fossil fuel industry when it prohibited drilling on millions acres in the Arctic and cancelled Arctic National Wildlife Refuge drilling leases.¹⁸ The combination of anti-energy policies and China’s consolidation of critical minerals necessary for EVs has left American domestic energy producers searching for answers just like you and your entourage were left searching for chargers.¹⁹ The United Auto Workers just launched an “unprecedented” strike at

⁸ *Supra*, n.1.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Supra*, n. 4.

¹¹ *Supra*, n.1.

¹² See e.g., Lisa Friedman, *Biden Administration to Bar Drilling on Millions of Acres in Alaska*, N.Y. TIMES (Sep. 6, 2023).

¹³ *Supra*, n. 1.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ See Bart Ziegler, *Electric Vehicles Need More—and Faster—Charging Stations. How Do We Get Them?*, WALL ST. J. (Nov. 12, 2022)

¹⁶ *Supra*, n. 1.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Supra*, n. 12.

¹⁹ See Jon Emont, *China Controls Minerals That Run the World—and It Just Fired a Warning Shot at U.S.*, WALL ST. J. (July 2023).

auto plants in Missouri, Michigan and Ohio over concerns about job losses due to the shift toward EVs.²⁰

To assist the Committee's oversight of your summer 2023 EV road trip, we request the following documents and information as soon as possible but no later than October 10, 2023:

1. All documents and communications referring or relating to the summer 2023 EV road trip, including the dates, itinerary, and names of all drivers and passengers;
2. A comprehensive list of each vehicle on the summer 2023 EV road trip, including your vehicle, DOE staff vehicles, Secret Service vehicles, and any other vehicle used at any time on the EV road trip by the drivers and passengers identified in request number 1;
3. All documents and communications referring or relating to qualitative or quantitative assessments of the EV road trip before, during, or after the summer 2023 EV road trip;
4. All documents related to any cost to taxpayers for your summer 2023 EV road trip, including but not limited to fuel, promotional materials, lodging, meals, and other incidental expenses;
5. All documents and communications referring or relating to any reimbursement associated with the summer 2023 EV road trip;
6. All documents and communications between and among DOE staff and auto manufacturers of the EV vehicles identified in request number 2, including communications between and among you and DOE staff and Cadillac regarding the Cadillac Lyriq you drove on the summer 2023 EV road trip which encountered an "isolated hardware issue"²¹;
7. All documents and communications containing the word "Tesla" referring or relating to your summer 2023 EV road trip;
8. All documents and communications referring or relating to the record keeping of emissions produced by yourself, DOE staff, and Secret Service during the summer 2023 EV road trip;

²⁰ Chris Isidore and Vanessa Yurkevich, *UAW workers launch unprecedented strike against all Big Three automakers*, CNN BUSINESS, (Sep. 15, 2023); David Ferris, *How a strike imperils Detroit's drive to EVs*, E&E NEWS (Sep. 14, 2023).

²¹ *Supra*, n. 1.

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm

September 26, 2023

Page 4 of 4

9. All documents and communications between and among you and your staff and the White House referring or relating to the summer 2023 EV road trip, including but not limited to the Council on Environmental Quality;
10. All documents and communications between and among you and your staff and any other executive agency referring or relating to the summer 2023 EV road trip, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, the State Department, and the Department of Homeland Security; and
11. All documents and communications between and among you and your staff and any nongovernmental third-party or parties referring or relating to the summer 2023 EV road trip.

Additionally, please provide a staff-level briefing on this matter as soon as possible, but no later than October 3, 2023. Attached are instructions for producing the documents and information to the Committee. If you have any questions, contact the Committee on Oversight and Accountability Majority staff at 202-225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Accountability is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate, “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



James Comer
Chairman
Committee on Oversight and Accountability



Pat Fallon
Chairman
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,
Energy Policy, and Regulatory
Affairs

cc: The Honorable Jamie B. Raskin, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Accountability

The Honorable Cori Bush, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs