U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Group14 Technologies Press Conference

February 22, 2024

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

Sen. Cantwell: Sen. Cantwell: Well, I want to thank Group14 for hosting us today, and for their innovation and leadership. I also want to just make sure we recognize that Grant County Commissioner Danny Stone is here, Grant County Commissioner Cindy Carter, and [Moses Lake] City Council Member Mark Fancher. Thank you guys for being here as well.

I want to say a special thanks to Secretary Granholm, she's been to our state several times. She has also brought a lot of money which I very much appreciate! Investments in helping the partnership she just described with the R&D capabilities of the Department of Energy helping Washington State show that we can lead the transformation in energy technology by demonstrating large scale testbeds. That's really what Group14 is doing.

I know that Moses Lake must be incredibly proud of the fact that $200 million battery investments are being made here. We were at the other facility earlier today, but what you're seeing here behind us is a massive facility with newly installed equipment. Something very, very important, manufacturing innovation at scale in the state of Washington with great paying jobs.

We couldn't be more happy to know that we can bring the supply chain back to the United States and that innovation in the United States can lead and beat the competition anywhere in the world.

We are making sure that these products will reduce emissions and reduce energy costs. And Group14 just because they were a little company in Woodinville doesn't mean they weren't a big, big player on the national stage. To make the world's electric vehicles cheaper and more efficient with breakthrough battery technology, trust me, is the envy of any nation.

But thanks to the $100 million DOE grant that, as the Secretary said, were part of the infrastructure bill, Group14 and Sila which we just visited are building two new manufacturing facilities right here in Moses Lake.

So, this new battery technology can power emission free vehicles that will go farther, that will obviously be the nation's cheapest if you think about our electricity supply here, and the huge benefit that we have in Washington to EV drivers. It costs about the same to fully charge an EV in our state as it does to just buy one gallon of gasoline. And that's even before the technology that's going to come out of this facility. So that means you're going to help deliver something that's going to be even faster, and even more economical.

So, we know it's no accident that people are here today. We have two great things. We have great, cheap, affordable, clean electricity, and we have a technically talented workforce that can deliver on this project.

I know that many of you here are excited to be part of this historic effort. As our state continues to try to focus on everything from fusion energy to quantum computing to hydrogen to clean transportation, a smart grid, and next-generation battery technologies, this story will be a critically important one.

The fact that graphite, so rare here in the United States, has been the key component to these anodes but yet here, you are going to change the game. Basically, with silicon anodes we are going to have a charging system that is much faster, a charge that's going to hold much longer, and we're going to have something that can be cost effective in the market.

So, I couldn't be happier to see that the infrastructure bill's resources are building jobs right here in Moses Lake. This project will support 300 well paid trade jobs just to construct the plant and create an additional 200 technical and operational jobs to start, ramp up, and sustain production. So, for all of these reasons I think it's a great day to celebrate in Moses Lake.

This region as a national hub for advanced batteries and innovation, its well on its way. So thanks to everyone and congratulations to Moses Lake. I especially want to give a great thanks to an innovator, to a co-founder, and to somebody who is going to make this silicon anode the norm of battery technology for the future. Please welcome the CEO and co-founder of Group14 Rick Luebbe.

Sila Roundtable

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Sen. Cantwell Remarks

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you. I was going to say the only thing we're still sore about is the national championship. The Huskies are still a little sore. But anyway, we'll be talking about that later.

I am so thrilled that you're here, Secretary Granholm. And so thrilled to be here with our governor who is a leader on these policies. And all of you who are really becoming a testbed for next generation energy technologies that are going to help our nation be competitive in the future on all sorts of innovation, but clearly the next opportunities in battery technology. So, thank you, for being pioneers, we really appreciate it.

It's exciting to be here with the secretary, because as governor of her state, she really kind of controlled the auto industry into leading the way on EVs. And I'm excited to be here with the governor because he set a mandate to get electric vehicles by 2035. So, I'm with two people who already have been big champions for the transformation that we are under way on now. And I'm happy to play a part with the EV tax credit, the first EV tax credit in the United States Senate.

But we are here now to talk about how we harness the affordability in our region, along with next generation efficiencies and battery technology. So, this Sila facility, really is kind of proving out what the Secretary was just saying that America's competitiveness depends on next generation innovation, and scaling that to a level that makes America competitive in the manufacturing sector.

So I am very excited to have participated in all three of those bills, the Infrastructure Bill, the CHIPS and Science Act, and the IRA bill. This particular investment came from the infrastructure side because we made it clear to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we felt like next generation R&D on this particular sector was critical for us moving ahead.

So, I'm excited that the innovation that we're talking about here really is digesting this issue of how to go from graphite anodes to silicon anodes. And how that silicon anode might get us a faster charge,

might get us a longer charge, might get us a more efficient vehicle overall to sell into the marketplace, and really reestablish the United States leadership.

The fact that graphite is kind of the norm du jour is a big challenge. And the fact though that REC is here in the neighborhood, is part of this partnership. So, thank you REC for just prevailing over so many trials and tribulations. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

I can't tell you how many conversations how many meetings, oh, my gosh, I can tell you about some someday. A great meeting with Risch, Crapo, Tester, myself, just pushing back on where we were with the Chinese on this issue.

But the bottom line is that this area now has all the resources because of this partnership. The fact that we have, and I know there's a lot of people here from BPA too, the fact that we have affordable electricity. You have a great silicon partner right here and now you got the Sila people telling us how we're going to get to this goal is very, very exciting moment for Moses Lake and the state of Washington.

So very happy to participate, glad we won the day, and are getting the resources invested in energy this way. And so glad that the secretary had the great sense to say yes, I like that application of these guys. And now she’s here to see the reality of -- I hope someone documents this. I hope someone writes a book, maybe it will be the governor. Maybe he'll write this story too because he's been leading on this transformation.

But this really is how America brings manufacturing jobs back to the United States. It’s so important for growing the middle class, so important for us, and our competitiveness as a nation. So, thank you all very much for taking on that challenge.