

GM ends talks to sell Hummer brand to Chinese buyer

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Enlarge By Mark Avery, AP

Sentinel photo of a Hummer H3 SUV parked in front of a building with a 'HUMMER' sign.

By Chris Woodyard, USA TODAY

GM will "begin a wind-down of the brand," and if another suitor doesn't appear, Hummer will head into extinction, said spokesman Nick Richards.

GM stopped making the last Hummer model, the H3, in January at a Shreveport, La., plant that is still making GM pickups. Only 2,521 Hummers remain in inventory at 150 U.S. and 220 foreign dealerships, he said.

There was no immediate explanation of why GM couldn't close the deal with Sichuan Tengzhong Heavy Industrial Machinery

except rumored reservations by the Chinese government.

GM is jettisoning Hummer as part of its financial restructuring, along with Saturn and Pontiac. It managed to sell only Saab among the brands it no longer wanted. A sale closed Tuesday to Spyker Cars of the Netherlands.

Few tears will be shed by environmentalists, for whom the Hummer brand was a lightning rod. The Hummer was "a rolling environmental disaster," says Roland Hwang, transportation program director for the National Resources Defense Council. It's "less cool to drive a Hummer when the polar ice caps are melting."

"Closing Hummer simultaneously improves the health of GM, China and the planet," wrote Dan Becker, director of the Center for Auto Safety's Safe Climate Campaign in an e-mail.

But Hummer owners still love the go-anywhere, do-anything vehicles. Carl Jarena, an engineer for an auto parts supplier in Plymouth, Mich., says GM's decision has him "almost in a depressed state." The Hummer, he said, was misunderstood.

He's put 55,000 miles on his 2006 H3, got up to 20 miles a gallon and uses it to pull other cars out of the snow.

"The people who wave to you make you feel like you are part of a special family," Jarena says.

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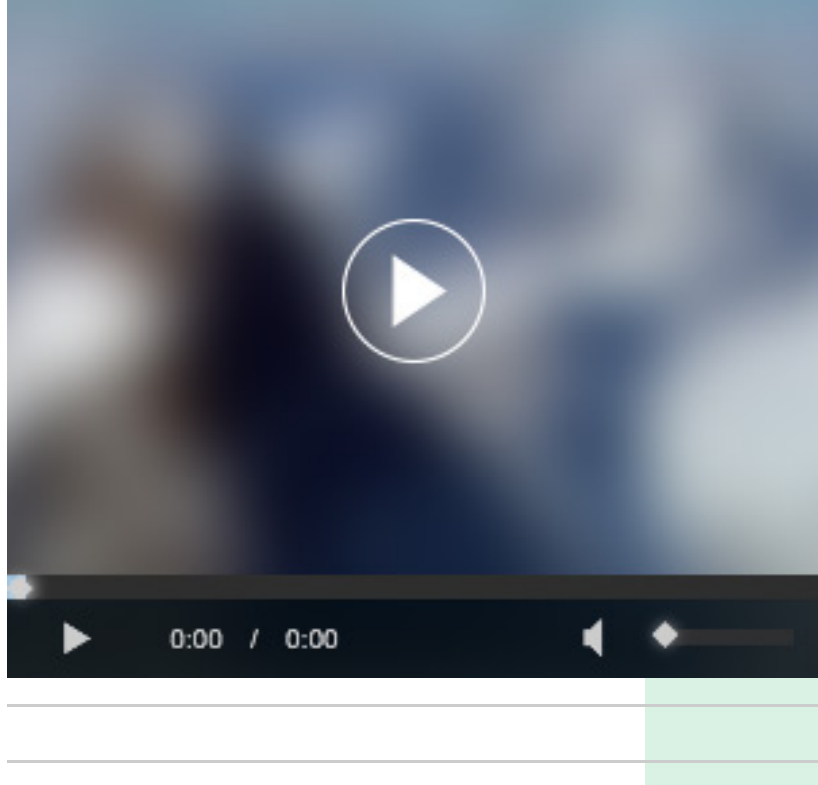
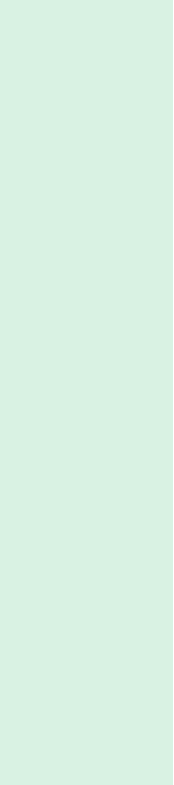
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