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## **Chevy Volt cruises to retirement**

**By: Maxine Joselow**

The era of the Chevy Volt is over.

As part of steep cuts to its operations, General Motors Co. plans to discontinue the award-winning hybrid electric vehicle, which became a point of pride for environmentalists and a punching bag for conservatives.

GM announced yesterday that it would close five plants and lay off thousands of workers in the United States and Canada. The automaker also said it would halt in 2019 production of slow-selling models, including the Chevrolet Volt and the Chevrolet Cruze.

The Volt was introduced in December 2010 as GM was emerging from bankruptcy. It was the first production plug-in car sold in the United States. News of its demise was first reported by Reuters.

With a lower price tag than its rivals, the Volt quickly garnered praise from advocates of vehicle electrification. It even became the first car made in the U.S. to win European Car of the Year.

But the Volt faced stiff criticism from conservatives who favored gasoline-powered vehicles, including Sen.-elect Mitt Romney (R-Utah). The former Massachusetts governor and Republican presidential candidate famously said in 2011 that the plug-in hybrid is an "idea whose time has not come."

Fox News anchor Neil Cavuto similarly blasted the Volt as a "Fred Flintstone car" and the "dumbest thing I've ever seen," Politico reported at the time.

"It's going to lead to a lot of divorces," Cavuto said, speculating that married couples would bicker over who forgot to charge the Volt overnight.

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But Autotrader analyst Michelle Krebs said consumers have gravitated away from hybrid EVs such as the Volt in recent years, favoring pure EVs such as its cousin, the Chevy Bolt.

"Chevy Volt sales have been in decline at the same time that Chevy Bolt EV sales were rising," Krebs said in an email. "We see a trend that EVs are replacing hybrids and plug-in hybrids like the Volt — substitution rather than expanding the entire segment."

GM's cuts will also affect hundreds of workers at a factory in Ohio, a key swing state that backed Trump in the 2016 election.

Ohio Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan yesterday blasted Trump for making empty promises about boosting U.S. manufacturing jobs. The Democrat also tied the cuts to the president's rollback of Obama-era clean car rules (E&E News PM, Nov. 26).

Trump, for his part, yesterday condemned GM's announcement, saying he told GM CEO Mary Barra that he was unhappy with her decision to slash production at the Ohio plant.

"I have no doubt that in the not too distant future, they'll put something else," the president said. "They better put something else in."

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