

Timeline

The following are among the events documented in WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR?

1979

President Jimmy Carter resolves that the U.S. will never use more foreign oil than it imported in 1977.

1977 total U.S. oil imports (crude & refined): 8.8 million barrels/day

2005 total U.S. oil imports (crude & refined): 13.5 million barrels/day

1987

GM's one-of-a-kind solar powered electric "Sunraycer" wins the World Solar Challenge Race in Australia.

1988

September 1988: GM CEO (1981-1990) Roger Smith agrees to fund a prototype for a practical consumer electric car, engineered by the Sunraycer design team, AeroVironment.

1990

The Los Angeles basin (which includes LA, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties) issues 41 stage-one smog alerts (a stage-one alert is called when ozone, one of the most health-damaging components of smog, exceeds .20 parts per million.)

January 1990: The GM Impact (re-named the EV1 before commercial release in 1996) is introduced as a concept car at the Los Angeles Auto Show.

September 1990: The California Air Resources Board (CARB) adopts the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) mandate, requiring that automakers' California market share include 2% ZEVs in 1998, 5% ZEVs in 2001, and 10% ZEVs in 2003.

1995

March 1995: The American Automobile Manufacturing Association circulates a confidential proposal to launch a public relations "grassroots education campaign" to repeal the CARB ZEV program.

1996

March 1996: In response to auto industry pressure, CARB makes the ZEV mandate more flexible. A "Memorandum of Agreement" between

CARB and seven of the largest automakers states, in part, that the automakers will “promote and market ZEVs (zero-emission vehicles)” and build them in a “production capacity sufficient to meet market demand in California.” The compromise frees automakers from meeting the 2% ZEV quota in 1998 but still requires that 10% of all new cars and light duty trucks in California be zero-emission, beginning in 2003.

December 1996: The GM EV1 production electric vehicle is made available for consumer lease at \$400 - 500 a month.

1999

December 1999: GM finalizes its purchase of the Hummer-brand name from AM General Corporation.

2000

January 2000: Despite GM’s claim that it was still committed to its electrical vehicle program, vice-chairman Harry Pearce says that “there is no particular need” to continue building electric vehicles. It also begins, in the coming months, to shift production from the EV1 to gasoline powered cars at its plant in Lansing, Michigan.

2001

October 2001: GM begins to lay off its EV1 sales team, starting with its most successful sales specialists.

2002

January 2002: GM, DaimlerChrysler, and seven San Joaquin Valley auto dealerships sue CARB in the U.S. District Court in Fresno to repeal the ZEV mandate.

October 2002: The U.S. Department of Justice files a “friend of the court brief” in support of GM and DaimlerChrysler’s lawsuit against CARB, arguing that its ZEV mandate amounts to an attempt to regulate fuel economy standards, which only the federal government can do.

December 2002: Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D., Chairman of the California Air Resources Board, is named the 2003 Chairman of the California Fuel Cell Partnership, an organization comprised of public agencies and private companies that promotes fuel cell vehicle technology and infrastructure growth.

2003

January 2003: President George W. Bush calls for research and development of hydrogen fuel cell vehicle technology in his State of the Union Address.

January 2003: Toyota announces that it would stop production on the RAV4 EV, citing poor sales. The RAV4 EV was the only commercial electric vehicle made by a major automaker that could be purchased (\$42,000), in addition to being leased monthly.

April 2003: The California Air Resources Board, chaired by Alan C. Lloyd, Ph.D, modifies further the ZEV mandate, effectively dooming the electric car. Under the new revision, auto makers no longer have to make electric cars but instead are required to roll out a mix of fuel cell vehicles, gas-electric hybrids and PZEVs (partially zero emission vehicles) beginning in 2008. Dr. Lloyd had recently become Chairman of the California Fuel Cell Partnership promoting development of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

April 2003: Citing that it can no longer provide parts to repair the vehicles, GM announces that it will not renew EV1 leases. It intends to reclaim the vehicles by end of 2004 and tow trucks are dispatched to impound vehicles from customers unwilling to return their EV1s.

July 2003: Mock funeral for the EV1 is held in Los Angeles to draw press attention to GM pulling the EV1 off the road.

Ford, Honda, and Toyota also pull their fleets of leased electric vehicles off the road.

2004

December 2004: Following a tip that EV1s are being trucked to GM's Arizona proving grounds, Chris Paine (Director of WHO KILLED THE ELECTRIC CAR?) rents a helicopter. Scouting the vast proving ground, he spots and films piles of crushed EV1s.

2005

February 2005: The "Don't Crush" Campaign is launched. EV activists launch a 24-hour-a-day vigil at the GM Burbank facility to protest and monitor the fate of 78 impounded EV1s that are discovered in a lot behind a GM facility in Burbank, CA. Activists offer GM \$1.9 Million to return the impounded fleet to willing buyers.

March 2005: EV activists learn that GM is loading EV1s held in the Burbank lot onto car-carrier trucks. Protestors block driveways and some are arrested by Burbank PD.

March 2005: In an interview with the filmmakers of "Who Killed the Electric Car?" GM spokesman Dave Barthmuss states that every part of the EV1s are being recycled, not simply crushed.

2006

March, 2006: Toyota and GM, the world's two largest automakers, end joint research on hydrogen-powered fuel cells because they could not agree on sharing intellectual property rights from their hydrogen fuel cell research.