

# **Made in the USA** **Reports**

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## **What's Good for General Motors is Not Necessarily Good for America**

By Joel D. Joseph, Chairman, Made in the USA Foundation

General Motors has a very short memory. And no loyalty. In 2009, GM received a massive and generous bailout of \$49.5 billion from U.S. taxpayers. The U.S. government, and the U.S. taxpayers, lost \$11.2 billion on its investment in General Motors. The government sold its stock in GM for \$38.3 billion in December of 2013.

In 1953, President Eisenhower nominated GM's CEO, Charles Wilson, to be Secretary of Defense. During his confirmation hearing, Wilson said, "I thought what was good for the country was good for General Motors and vice versa." Sadly, while this was true in 1953, it is no longer true.

Buick now makes four of the seven models sold in the U.S. overseas: one in China, one in Poland, one in Canada and one in South Korea. Neither China, nor Poland, nor South Korea helped to save GM, but their economies are the beneficiaries of the "new" General Motors. To be fair, I must admit that the government of Canada (and the province of Ontario) invested \$13 billion to help save GM, a small fraction of the tab paid for by U.S. taxpayers. Canada lost about \$3 billion as a result of its investment.

Canada may deserve to have one Buick model made in Ontario. Based on this math, the United States deserves to have at least four Buick models made domestically. The U.S. invested four times as much as Canada and should get four times the result. Instead, we got shafted.

The new General Motors was created to save jobs in the United States. The U.S. government appointed a “car czar” (first Steven Rattner, currently Ron Bloom) and controlled the majority of the GM board of directors. However, none of these officials did anything to ensure the long-term creation of jobs here in the United States.

GM will begin selling its made in China “Buick Envision” in the United States this year. This Envision model is a compact crossover produced at a plant in the Yantai, Shandong province. This will be the first, and hopefully the last, car to be imported from China.

Buick sells the Encore subcompact crossover, imported from Bupyeong, South Korea, at its American dealerships. The Buick Regal was manufactured in Rüsselsheim, Germany from 2009 to 2011, and then moved to Oshawa, Ontario, Canada where it is now made.

### **The Superbowl Ad**

During Superbowl 50, Buick announced its first convertible-style car in forty years, the Buick Cascada. The ad, however, did not mention that this new Buick is made in Gliwice, Poland and retails for \$33,000. The workers at that GM’s plant in Poland make an average of about 30 zlotys per hour, the equivalent to \$7.80 an hour. This is about \$15,000 per year. Very few of the workers at GM’s Poland factory could afford to buy one of the cars that they manufacture, a violation of Henry Ford’s rule of paying autoworkers a decent wage. If you add on the cost of shipping these cars from Poland to the U.S., GM’s savings is minimal; probably less than the cost of one superbowl ad.

The thirty-second superbowl ad cost GM \$5 million, enough to pay Poland’s workers for 650,000 hours of work, or 300 workers for one year. The five million dollars would have been better spent making the cars in Michigan where Buick closed several plants. Instead, these plant closures have decimated the city of Flint. In addition to having toxic lead contaminated water, so many of its residents are now jobless and homeless.

### **The New GM**

Four Buick models, all imported. Buick now manufacturers only three models in the United States: the Verano, the Enclave and the LaCrosse. So a majority of Buicks models are now imported. If you *really* want to buy a Buick, you should buy one of these three domestic models.

I haven't heard of any outcry or autoworker strikes over this massive outsourcing of American jobs. But if you've wondered why workers, and voters, are as mad as hell and voting for Trump and Sanders, you don't have to look much further than General Motors and its Buick division.

## **O Say, Can You See?**

In this day and age we see the world through our eyeglasses and automobile windshields. Unfortunately, both of these are going offshore. You can do something about it by being informed, shopping carefully, and looking at the labels.

### **Safelite**

Safelite Auto Glass, the largest aftermarket seller of automobile windshields in the United States, imports most of its auto glass from China. Safelite tells consumers that some of its glass is American, but it falsely says that windshields made by U.S. companies in China is U.S. glass.

You can buy American-made replacement windshields at your car dealership. It will be a little more expensive, but it will be original equipment. Safelite has received thousands of consumer complaint for Chinese glass that is inferior. It is not perfectly smooth, so the windshield will not get properly cleaned by windshield wipers. The Better Business Bureau, PissedConsumer.com, RipoffReport.com, ComplaintsBoard.com all report hundreds of complaints against Safelite.

## **Made in the USA Eyewear**

In recent years, the Italian mega-eyewear company Luxottica, has purchased two of the largest eyeglasses manufacturers in the United States, Rayban and Oakley. It bought them and moved their production overseas. Even though Luxottica was exposed on CBS's 60 Minutes as a virtual monopoly, the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department have done nothing. Luxottica produces Oakley, Rayban, Ralph Lauren, Macy's, Bulgari, Dolce & Gabbana, Burberry, Prada, Tory Burch and many other brands, and owns retail stores including Lenscrafters, Pearl Vision and Sunglasses Hut.

Consumers can fight back buy buying American-made frames. If your optician doesn't carry these American-made frames, you can buy them online from one of these fine American optical manufacturers and have your optician or eyeglass store put prescription lenses in:

**American Optical** ([aoeyewear.com](http://aoeyewear.com))

The Original Pilot sunglasses have been used by U.S. military pilots for more than 50 years, and were used by NASA astronauts on the moon. American Optical was established in 1833, the oldest U.S. manufacturer of eyeglasses. Located in Southbridge, Massachusetts.



**Art Craft** ([Artcrafoptical.com](http://Artcrafoptical.com))

Since 1918 Art Craft has been making high-quality eyeglass frames in Rochester, New York.



Art-Craft 100A Glasses  
Price: \$79.00



[Art-Craft Metrovision 205 Glasses](#)  
Price: \$79.00

**Kala** (kalaeyewear.com)

Stylish, hand-made in California, contemporary plastic frames. Kala won the “Made in the USA Hall of Fame Award” for eyewear.



Kala G300 Glasses  
Price: \$202.00



Kala G903/5/7 Glasses  
\$202.00

**Proof Eyewear** (iwantproof.com)

Wooden stylish eyewear, made in Idaho. From \$100.00. As seen on ABC’s Shark Tank.



**Radians** (radians.com)

Radians makes protective eyewear for industry, shooting glasses and other eyewear.



**Randolph** (Randolphusa.com)

Made in Massachusetts since 1972, Randolph makes a variety of metal-framed eyeglasses of top quality. Randolph makes excellent aviator-style glasses.



**Shuron** (Shuron.com)

Shuron makes frames of all types in Greenville, SC and has been in business since 1865.



Shuron 401  
Price: \$73.60



Shuron Barrette Glasses  
Price: \$78.20