

The Great Divide:

Consumers vs. Auto Industry Investments in Future Technologies, Products & Business Models

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The U.S. automotive industry is in the midst of a critical period. U.S. light vehicle sales are at a very high level, but sales are starting to slow as the United States faces economic headwinds. Automakers have been selling a rich mix of pickup trucks, SUVs, and CUVs that have produced record profits over the last decade. While trucks, SUVs, and CUVs are “paying the bills,” the automakers are simultaneously making big bets on the future of connected and autonomous vehicle (CAV) technologies, new mobility service models, and advanced powertrain solutions – and many times, they are partnering with other firms to spread the risk of these investments. Ford Chairman Bill Ford summed up the divide when he announced his company’s \$11 billion investment in EVs in January 2018, “...we’re all in now. The only question is will the customers be there with us, and we think they will.”

This presentation will address the U.S. segment mix, the impact of CAV on personal vehicle ownership, the tension between consumer demand and regulatory mandates on EVs, and the implications for the nation’s engineering and skilled talent development institutions and the overall technological leadership of the United States.