

GM now says it will support union at new battery factories

May 25 2021, by Tom Krisher

General Motors now says it will support efforts by the United Auto Workers union to organize employees at two U.S. electric vehicle battery factories that it's building in Ohio and Tennessee with a joint-venture partner.

The company's statement Tuesday about the plants departs from its past stance that the joint venture, called Ultium LLC, would decide on a bargaining strategy. But it falls into line with President Joe Biden's promise to create good-paying union jobs in the transition from combustion vehicles to electric.

It also comes after the UAW has made strong statements that Detroit-based GM and crosstown rival Ford have a "[moral obligation](#)" to pay top union wages at [joint-venture](#) battery plants. Experts say the union's future could be imperiled if it can't represent workers at the plants and get a top UAW wage of about \$31 per hour. Those jobs will replace work that will be lost at combustion-engine and transmission factories.

"GM will build on a long history of supporting unions to promote safety, quality, training and well-paying jobs for American workers," the statement said. "Both GM and Ultium Cells LLC respect workers' right to unionize and the efforts of the UAW to organize battery cell manufacturing workers."

GM spokesman Dan Flores would not comment beyond the statement about the battery plants in Lordstown, Ohio, and Spring Hill, Tennessee,

which combined will employ about 2,300 workers. The other partner in Ultium LLC is South Korean [battery](#) maker LG Energy Solution.

The statement said that the UAW has a historic and constructive relationship with the auto industry, and "would be well positioned to represent the workforce."

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