

As Trump's tariffs take effect Stellantis announces thousands of layoffs in Canada, Mexico and US

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Only a few hours after President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" tariffs were announced, workers across North America began experiencing the consequences. Stellantis will "temporarily" idle its Windsor Assembly Plant in Canada and Toluca Assembly Plant in Mexico. About 4,500 workers in Windsor will be impacted. Some 2,600 are employed at the Toluca facility.

In the United States, Stellantis is laying off 900 workers at factories which supply both the Canadian and Mexican plants. Workers at the Warren and Sterling Heights stamping plants outside of Detroit, and two transmission factories and one casting plant in Kokomo, Indiana are among those that will be impacted in the US by the layoffs.

In a statement to Stellantis employees, head of North American operations Antonio Filosa said, "With the new automotive sector tariffs now in effect, it will take our collective resilience and discipline to push through this challenging time." He continued, "But we will quickly adapt to these policy changes and will protect our company, maintain our competitive edge and continue delivering great products to our customers."

The Stellantis executive added that the company was still assessing the long-term impact of the tariffs but had decided to take certain immediate actions by idling the Windsor and Toluca plants.

The cuts are the predictable result of the disruption caused by the tariffs, which amount to a declaration of economic war by the Trump administration against the rest of the world.

Despite the lying claims by United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain that the tariffs will lead to more jobs for American workers, the reality is the working class will pay the price both in higher prices and layoffs. Any production "reshored" to the US, moreover, will

come with demands for lower wages and other concessions.

Trump, who has the support of major union heads, including Fain and Teamsters President Sean O'Brien, is aiming to create a fortress North America in preparation for world war against its global capitalist rivals. Fain has claimed that Trump—who is witch-hunting immigrants, deporting students for opposing the US-backed Israeli genocide, firing thousands of federal workers and erecting a fascist dictatorship—is fighting for the working class by waging trade war.

In response to the layoff announcements, Fain issued a defensive statement feigning shock and blaming Stellantis management for the cuts, while not mentioning the tariffs at all. "Stellantis continues to play games with workers' lives," Fain said. "As we've shown time and again, they've got the money, the capacity, the product, and the workforce to employ thousands more UAW members in Michigan, Indiana, and beyond. These layoffs are a completely unnecessary choice that the company is making."

The UAW bureaucrat predictably said nothing about the loss of workers' jobs in Canada and Mexico.

These cuts are only a foretaste of the jobs bloodbath that is coming. In reality there is no such thing as an "American" car. Every vehicle that rolls off the assembly line represents the collective labor of workers all over the world united in a globally interconnected chain of production. Tariffs will disrupt production and lead to economic collapse. If not stopped by the intervention of the working class this path leads to trade war and world war as the experience of the 1930s testifies.

A *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* reporting team spoke to workers at the Stellantis Windsor Assembly Plant Thursday. Referring to Fain's support for

trade war, one worker said, “That reflects upon their ignorance. The auto industry is too tied together and integrated. It’s going to affect his own members. Multi-billion-dollar companies are going to exacerbate the recession to the point that tariffs could possibly cause a depression like they did back in the 1930s. The collaboration of workers across borders would work.”

Another worker added, “It’s not a tax against us (Canada), it’s a tax against the American people. It’s going to hurt both sides. There are five plants in the states where there are going to be layoffs and a few in Mexico. We are so closely integrated and we are in profit-driven industry.

“I don’t blame the American people, it’s completely out of their control. We’ve worked together for decades. We can’t be at each other’s throats.” Asked if workers should have a global strategy to fight the global corporations, he said, “Absolutely. That’s what the unions are supposed to do for us. But us, as workers, we can take it a step further.”

A younger worker said, “This trade war is garbage. All the tariffs need to be finished right now. I just started this job six or seven months ago and I didn’t think I’d be getting laid off this soon.”

Another worker said, “I love my American brothers and sisters. I am grateful to live next to America, but I disagree with the tariffs they are imposing on us. I won’t let them divide us and will do everything to fight that.

“A trade war is not good for anyone including the United States. It’s a shortsighted solution for a big problem. Workers should be working together, we should not be pit against each other. My plant has been here for over a hundred years. We are not taking any jobs from people in the United States. It’s just not possible, it’s just not true. Us in a trade war only hurts all of us. The US, Canada and Mexican workers should be together. Our economies are all integrated together.”

No less hostile to a unified movement of the working class than the UAW bureaucracy, the Canadian auto union called for retaliatory tariffs against the US. “Canada needs to respond swiftly and strategically to halt Trump’s attempt to steal jobs and pick off industries one by one,” Unifor President Lana Payne said.

These cuts in North America follow the announcement by Stellantis that it has scrapped plans for a battery plant and parts distribution center in Belvidere, Illinois, and scaled back plans for reopening its idled Belvidere assembly plant. The factory is supposed to open in 2027 with only 1,500 workers returning.

The decision to reopen the plant—which employed 4,000 workers in the 1980s—was the centerpiece of the supposed “victory” of Fain’s bogus “Stand Up strike” in 2023. After the wave of mass layoffs that followed the sellout agreement and Stellantis’ decision to put the Belvidere reopening on hold, the UAW launched the Keep the Promise campaign, which consisted of filing grievances and holding votes to authorize a strike, which the UAW bureaucracy never intended to call.

Fain attributed the resignation of Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares last December to his publicity stunt campaign and then told workers to place their faith in Stellantis’ new North American executives to “work with the union” to reopen the Belvidere plant and “save” American jobs. In the runup to these new job cuts, the UAW worked with Stellantis to press workers in Michigan and Ohio to accept buyouts to proactively reduce headcounts.

With a large selloff on Wall Street and increasing predictions of an economic recession, job cuts are sweeping across the US. According to outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, “US-based employers announced 275,240 job cuts in March, a 60 percent increase from the 172,017 cuts announced one month prior.” That is a 205 percent increase from March 2024, which was the highest monthly total that year. The total included 216,215 furloughs of federal government workers.

Among other job cut announcements, Whirlpool in Amana, Iowa is laying off 650 workers effective June 1, citing lower sales. Chevron meanwhile is cutting 600 jobs at its old headquarters in the San Francisco Bay Area in California. Graphic Packaging Holding Company plans to close its manufacturing location in Middletown, OH, eliminating 130 jobs.



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