

As UAW conceals plans to scrap F-150 Lightning

Ford extends layoffs at Dearborn Truck and Rouge EV Center

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Are you an autoworker at Ford or another other company? Fill out the form at the bottom of this article for information on building rank-and-file committees to fight the job cuts.

Ford Motor Company has extended layoffs at its massive Dearborn Rouge complex, idling both the Dearborn Truck Plant (DTP) and the adjacent Rouge Electric Vehicle Center (REV-C), where the F-150 Lightning is assembled.

On November 6, a United Auto Workers Local 600 official told workers that both plants—which currently employ a total of 4,000 UAW members—would be shut this week, without explanation or any return-to-work date.

This brings the shutdown to four weeks at REV-C and three weeks at DTP. Workers have been told only to watch for robocalls.

On October 23, UAW Local 600 DTP Unit Chairman Nick Kottalis told the 500 remaining REV-C workers they would be “laid off indefinitely,” then abruptly retracted the statement. It is clear the UAW bureaucracy had advance notice of layoffs and concealed this information, while Ford executives and Wall Street analysts debated whether to abandon the company’s flagship electric pickup project.

The same day that workers received notice that both plants would be idled this week, the *Wall Street Journal* revealed that Ford is in “active discussions” about scrapping the F-150 Lightning entirely. The *Journal* called the Lightning “money-losing” and noted that the company has already racked up multibillion-dollar EV losses. Neither Ford nor the UAW has provided workers a word of explanation.

Dearborn Truck workers who spoke to the WSWS described growing economic insecurity and denounced the complicity of UAW officials.

One worker said:

We were laid off in the second week of October, but REV-C had already been off for almost a month by that time. They sent us a text last Thursday saying we would be off this week. They keep pushing back our return date. People are very angry.

Addressing the broader assault on workers, he added:

Cutting food stamps and SNAP payments is horrible. People are already starving to death. This is a direct attack on the

working class. Trump is pushing to create an authoritarian government and there are people who work for the government who are not being paid.

They do not care about the working class. We need to get together with the rank-and-file committees and discuss what we’re going to do about this.

Another worker said:

I remember when [UAW President] Shawn Fain was pushing his endorsement of Donald Trump’s plan for getting America “back on track.” He said tariffs would bring back jobs. Look where we are now. I’m four weeks into the shutdown. Employees are being denied unemployment with no help. Every Thursday we get a robocall saying we’re laid off another week.

A third DTP worker told the WSWS:

This will be my fourth week off. The shutdown is all about the company making money. Cutting food stamps and SNAP is murder. I’m hoping that the people here in the United States are getting to the point where they say, “We have had enough. And we are ready to make some drastic changes.” That time is coming and it can’t come soon enough.

Ford once presented the Lightning as a “modern Model T” and the foundation of a new era of American EV manufacturing. The UAW bureaucracy paraded it as proof that union jobs would be secured for a generation. Yet in October, Ford sold roughly 1,500 Lightnings, compared to about 66,000 gas-powered F-Series trucks, and has lost more than \$13 billion on EVs since 2023. The company, with the assistance of the UAW bureaucracy, is now imposing the costs on the backs of workers.

Ford’s reversal mirrors similar moves across the industry. General Motors will reduce Detroit’s Factory Zero electric vehicle plant to one shift in January 2026, eliminating about 1,200 jobs. GM is also pausing battery cell output for six months at its Ultium plants in

Warren, Ohio, and Spring Hill, Tennessee, affecting another 2,100 workers through temporary and indefinite layoffs. Dana Thermal Products is permanently closing its Auburn Hills, Michigan, EV component plant, opened only recently to build battery cooling plates, destroying roughly 200 jobs amid what the company called “lower-than-expected EV volumes.”

The shift from Biden’s EV incentives to Trump’s tariff nationalism is tactical. Both serve the same class objective: restructuring the auto industry against workers while preparing for geopolitical confrontation with China. Biden promoted EVs and battery production to secure industrial supply chains and catch up with China in critical technologies and minerals essential for the military. He collaborated with the UAW bureaucracy to impose labor concessions and automation, and both hailed the sellout of the 2023 auto strike as a victory that paved the way for a “just transition to EVs.”

Trump scrapped EV credits and imposed tariffs, claiming the EV transition benefited China. The objective is to force production to the United States under lower labor costs and intensified automation, while escalating trade war. In practice, both strategies produce layoffs, job insecurity and speedup.

The US Labor Department under both administrations opposed the lawsuit by socialist Mack Trucks worker and UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman and upheld the fraudulent 2022-23 UAW election, which installed Shawn Fain despite tens of thousands of autoworkers never receiving ballots. The aim was to ensure a leadership aligned with state-corporate restructuring.

Workers are discovering that “reshoring” does not mean restoring secure jobs. It means relocating production only to eliminate labor through automation once it arrives.

Automakers cannot raise vehicle prices further without collapsing demand, so they are demanding massive cost reductions from suppliers, which produce more than 70 percent of vehicle content. This is driving a new wave of robotics and artificial intelligence across the supply chain.

As *Automotive News* reported, Lear is openly boasting about its “lights-out” manufacturing process. CEO Ray Scott told investors the company’s new Rochester, Michigan, facility shows “how a plant can run without human intervention,” calling the elimination of labor “key to winning onshoring.”

He stated: “Reduced labor overhead can offset the cost of moving production from Mexico.” In other words, production is coming back only to automate workers out of existence. And the UAW bureaucracy is aiding the process by dividing US workers from their brothers and sisters in Mexico, Canada, China and other countries and suppressing resistance.

GM’s decision to shift gas-powered pickup production from Mexico to Orion Township, Michigan, will add roughly \$1,000 per vehicle, *Automotive News* reported. GM plans to recover the cost through layoffs, speedup and automation. Ford is following the same strategy.

This offensive is also underway in logistics and other economic sectors. UPS and Amazon are eliminating tens of thousands of jobs through AI-driven scheduling systems, automated sorting, warehouse robotics and “smart logistics” platforms. UPS is rolling out autonomous hub systems and AI routing to permanently reduce its workforce. Amazon continues to deploy robotics, machine vision and algorithmic management to eliminate positions and intensify workloads. Technology is deployed not to lighten labor but to cheapen it and tighten control over workers.

On November 6, as Ford workers received layoff notices, Shawn

Fain held a town hall. Instead of opposing cuts, he boasted about the “success” of Trump’s “targeted tariffs” and said the UAW was working with the administration on revising the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to shift production to the US.

During the town hall event, rank-and-file workers posted dozens of comments denouncing the UAW bureaucracy for doing nothing to fight job cuts or bring laid off workers back to work. Unhinged, Fain lashed out at a worker at the Warren Stamping Plant who had been laid off for more than a year, saying, “Get real, the union doesn’t lay people off.”

In another demonstration of utter contempt, Fain claimed that autoworkers had been really “lucky” for the last 15 years since the 2008-09 recession. “Back in the day,” he said, “in the 1990s and after that, we ran in a cyclical nature in this industry, and every three to four years, we’d have downturns and there would be layoffs. We’ve been blessed to have these profitable years, for 15 years, where our members have done well.”

This decade and a half may have been good for Fain and the rest of the UAW bureaucracy, but it has been a disaster for workers. The years since the massive concessions Fain backed during the 2009 Obama-UAW restructuring of the industry have been defined by halved wages, gutted pensions and the creation of a vast tier of disposable temporary workers now being thrown into unemployment.

The town hall confirmed what workers increasingly recognize: The UAW bureaucracy speaks for the corporations and the government, not for the workers.

The Ford layoffs are part of a coordinated corporate-government strategy to slash jobs and impose speedup and automation across auto, logistics and other industries. Workers must organize independently of the UAW apparatus through rank-and-file committees in every plant.

These committees should mobilize the power of shop floor workers to demand an end to layoffs, full income and benefits during shutdowns, democratic control over production and safety, and unity with workers in Mexico, Canada, Europe and Asia against nationalism and trade war. This must be combined with a fight to defend immigrant workers, demand an end to the deployment of ICE agents and troops to major US cities, and drive Trump and his fascist cabal from power.

The global assault on jobs marks the beginning of a new stage of struggle. The task is to organize, unify across borders and prepare a conscious fight for the expropriation of the oligarchs and for socialism.

Technology like AI and automation must be used to shorten the workweek and raise living standards, not destroy livelihoods. The auto and logistics industries must be reorganized as publicly owned and democratically controlled enterprises serving human need, not private profit.

To fight against layoffs, attend the online meeting hosted by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) and the Socialist Equality Party (US) on Sunday, November 16, at 3:00 p.m. US Eastern Time. [Register here](#).



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