

## AUTOMOTIVE

# McLaren CEO lobbies for electric future

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*The head of the brand says that governmental support is critical in taking the risk out of electric transitions. Image credit: McLaren*

By EMILY IRIS DEGN FOR LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Michael Leiters, the head of British automaker **McLaren**, is encouraging the United Kingdom's legislative figures to support the energy transition.

The CEO states that governmental investment is the key to eliminating the perceived risks of electrification. At this week's SMMT International Automotive Summit 2024 in London, Mr. Leiters outlined the possibilities of souped-up EVs and green supercars.

"A clear industrial strategy, led by investment in the domestic supply chain, will deliver growth, support jobs, help decarbonize the economy and secure a vibrant future for the U.K. performance car industry," said Mr. Leiters, in a statement.

"It's time we regained confidence in our sector by investing in a world-class domestic supply chain to support the development of tomorrow's high-performance vehicles," he said. "The U.K. was once the world's largest vehicle exporter.

"Today it remains home to some of the world's most admired performance car brands, as well as the majority of Formula 1 racing teams."

## A winning drive

Mr. Leiters asserts that as of right now, the U.K. supply chain does not have the infrastructure to produce electric supercars.

A strategic investment roadmap is needed, and the McLaren executive asks that the government provide one. He believes that there is an opportunity for the country to emerge as a leader in the industry if it can bring in financial backing.

"We must harness the skills, knowledge and ingenuity of the U.K. motorsport and performance car industry to create a global, high-performance center of excellence," said Mr. Leiters, in a statement.

"U.K.-based luxury and sports car brands command tremendous pricing power thanks to their rich histories, intrinsic brand value and class-leading performance attributes," he said. "As a result, the productivity gross value added of McLaren employees is 51 percent higher than that of the U.K. automotive manufacturing sector as a whole.

"With more than 90 percent of McLaren supercars being exported, the U.K. performance car industry provides an excellent return on investment for taxpayers."



*The CEO states that change in the automotive industry is often led by luxury and specialty manufacturers. Image credit: McLaren*

The CEO calls the costs of shifting to electric “astronomical,” particularly for suppliers that are low-volume and extremely specialized.

Demand for electric supercars remains low among customers as the technology is in the process of getting caught up ([see story](#)). Mr. Leiters attributes this to the maturity of hybrid and combustion engine vehicles, which offer what many consider to be a better performance and less risk as far as investment goes.

“But we have an opportunity to invest in next-generation, high power-dense battery cell manufacturing and ensure the UK is at the forefront of future performance car powertrain technology,” said Mr. Leiters.

“Even hybrid vehicles, which we expect will account for the majority of supercars sold throughout this decade, require the need to locally source high-performance battery technology due to the EU rules of origin requirements on exported vehicles,” he said. “Today, our hybrid McLaren Artura powertrain has 64 percent U.K. content.

“If this car was a pure EV, the U.K. content of the powertrain would reduce to 13 percent because we cannot currently source the relevant componentry in the U.K.”

According to the businessman, products within the luxury and high-performance segments tend to lead the charge and spark change.

“Look at the McLaren P1 a technological trailblazer which proved the capability of high-performance hybrid technology long before electrification was in the mainstream,” said Mr. Leiters.

“Developing a pure EV McLaren supercar, which can rival - if not exceed - the performance and driver-engagement of today’s supercars, could help drive the transition towards pure electrification among mass-market customers,” he said. “In the future, a thriving U.K. supply chain specializing in cutting-edge, high energy density cells would not only support supercar production but also other advanced manufacturing needs such as vertical take-off aircraft and drones.”