$25 Billion. That's What Trump Cost Detroit.

It is a critical part of every chief executive's job to anticipate the future. Failing to recognize and adapt to change can be the difference between thriving and disappearing. That's why corporate leaders are continually bracing their companies against a host of possibilities — another pandemic, global conflict, rising interest rates, climate change and competitors that arise from nowhere.

But it is pretty difficult to futureproof your company against stupid.

This is exactly what the American automobile industry is facing as a result of President Trump's gratuitous war against electric vehicles, which is forcing manufacturers to return to an increasingly outdated past. Ford Motor has mothballed production of the all-electric version of its flagship F-150 pickup truck and last month announced a $19.5 billion charge related to restructuring its E.V. business. General Motors, citing the loss of tax incentives for E.V. buyers and laxer pollution regulations, switched production at its Orion, Mich., plant from E.V.s to full-size S.U.V.s and pickups powered by internal combustion engines (ICE, in industry parlance). In doing so, G.M. last week announced that it was taking a $6 billion loss in the fourth quarter — on top of a similar $1.6 billion hit the quarter before.

Detroit allowed the E.V. pioneer Tesla to become the most valuable auto company in the world. But then the auto industry's chiefs actually got it right: They accelerated their electric vehicle programs to meet the market and a greener future, ensuring that they would be part of a transformation that's already happening globally.

One big reason for Mr. Trump's rejection of E.V.s is simple: President Joe Biden championed them as his administration pushed greener forms of transportation and energy.

G.M. had to hand its stake in a Michigan-based battery maker, Ultium Cells, to the South Korean conglomerate LG Energy Solution. That's significant, because such partnerships are vital to G.M.'s ability to stay ahead in battery technology or expand capacity should demand rise again.

That's especially true of China, where BYD has become the world's largest E.V. maker, overtaking Tesla. BYD started as a battery maker

and now exports its low-priced E.V.s to more than 70 countries. **Eventually, the United States will be one of them**. Our ability to compete with BYD and other Chinese competitors is being undermined.

Then there's the impact downstream. The auto industry's supply chain is a tiered system of parts and component makers. As part of the write-down, G.M. will take a $4.2 billion hit to cancel orders — and the pain will be felt particularly by small businesses, many of them in red states such as Ohio and Indiana. Some may have to close up shop. And keep in mind that every job in manufacturing typically supports three others.

At its current margins in North America, G.M. has to generate more than $16 billion in revenue to produce $1 billion in profit. Paying suppliers not to supply you is hardly a prudent use of capital.

Superior technology ultimately wins out. By the time the automobile industry is dominated by E.V.s, G.M. and Ford might have fallen well behind China, thanks to the Trump administration.

This isn't industrial policy; it's industrial suicide.