



# Department of Justice

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## **HITACHI AUTOMOTIVE SALES EXECUTIVE PLEADS GUILTY TO PARTICIPATING IN AUTO PARTS PRICE-FIXING CONSPIRACY**

### *Executive Sentenced to Serve 15 Months in U.S. Prison*

WASHINGTON – An executive of Hitachi Automotive Systems Ltd. pleaded guilty today and was sentenced to serve 15 months in a U.S. prison for his role in a global conspiracy to suppress and eliminate competition for certain automotive parts sold in the United States, the Department of Justice announced today.

Takashi Toyokuni, a former manager and director with responsibility over alternators and starters at Hitachi Automotive Systems Ltd. pleaded guilty today in the U.S. District Court of the Eastern District of Michigan to a one count charge of bid rigging and price fixing. As part of his plea agreement, Toyokuni also agreed to cooperate with the department's ongoing investigation and pay a \$20,000 criminal fine.

On Sept. 18, 2014, a federal grand jury in Detroit, Michigan, returned an indictment against Toyokuni, charging him with conspiring to allocate the supply of, rig bids for, and fix, stabilize and maintain the prices of, various automotive parts, including starter motors, alternators, air flow meters, valve timing control devices, fuel injection systems, electronic throttle bodies, ignition coils and inverters and/or motor generators, sold to automobile manufacturers in the United States and elsewhere. The automotive manufacturers included, depending on the product, Ford Motor Co., General Motors LLC, Nissan Motor Co. Ltd., Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co. Ltd., and certain of their subsidiaries.

According to the indictment, Toyokuni and his co-conspirators carried out the conspiracy by, among other things, agreeing during meetings and communications to coordinate bids submitted to the automobile manufacturers. The indictment charged Toyokuni with participating in the conspiracy beginning at least as early as January 2000 until at least February 2010.

“The defendant today accepted responsibility for his role in creating anticompetitive agreements in the automotive industry that undermined the marketplace and harmed U.S. businesses and consumers,” said Deputy Assistant Attorney General Brent Snyder of the Antitrust Division’s criminal enforcement program. “As a result of the many companies and individuals who have accepted responsibility during this investigation, we are transforming a critical industry into a competitive marketplace, which will greatly benefit U.S. consumers.”

Hitachi Automotive Systems Ltd. is a manufacturer of starter motors, alternators, air flow meters, valve timing control devices, fuel injection systems, electronic throttle bodies, ignition coils, inverters and motor generators and was engaged in the sale of these products in the United States and elsewhere. On Nov. 6, 2013, Hitachi Automotive Systems Ltd., pleaded guilty for its involvement in the conspiracy and was sentenced to pay a criminal fine of \$195 million.

Toyokuni is charged with price fixing and bid rigging in violation of the Sherman Act, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$1 million criminal fine for individuals. The maximum fine for an individual may be increased to twice the gain derived from the crime or twice the loss suffered by the victims of the crime, if either of those amounts is greater than the statutory maximum fine.

Including Toyokuni, 52 individuals have been charged in the government's ongoing investigation into market allocation, price fixing, and bid rigging in the auto parts industry. Additionally, 34 companies pleaded guilty or agreed to plead guilty and have agreed to pay a total of more than \$2.4 billion in fines.

Today's guilty plea arose from an ongoing federal antitrust investigation into price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct in the automotive parts industry, which is being conducted by each of the Antitrust Division's criminal enforcement sections and the FBI. Today's pleas are the result of the work of Assistant Chief Mark Grundvig, and Trial Attorneys Rebecca Ryan, Eric Meiring, Jason Jones and Diana Kane of the Division's Washington Criminal I Section, and special agents of the FBI's Detroit Field Office. Anyone with information on price fixing, bid rigging and other anticompetitive conduct related to other products in the automotive parts industry should contact the Antitrust Division's Citizen Complaint Center at 888-647-3258, visit [www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html](http://www.justice.gov/atr/contact/newcase.html), or call the FBI's Detroit Field Office at 313-965-2323.

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