



Ambassador Jeffrey L. Bleich – Volt Unveiling

**Remarks of Ambassador Bleich
at the Unveiling of the GM Holden Volt
Sydney**

(As prepared for delivery – December 9, 2011)

Thank you for that welcome Mike and for your leadership at Holden.

And thank you for allowing me to be part of the unveiling of this fantastic car this morning. I'd like to acknowledge my distinguished friends present today – Minister Anthony Albanese and Lord Mayor Clover Moore.

Now as U.S. Ambassador, I can't play favorites among American cars.

But fortunately, Motor Trend magazine can. And so I can just quote from Motor Trend's article which named the Volt its 2011 Car of the Year: the Volt is a car of the future that you can drive today.

This is the future we've been waiting for. This is not just some version of your grandfather's golf cart. This is the full promise of electric vehicle technology: a car that can go 160 km/hour, with all of the range and comfort of our best sedans that has no carbon footprint, that can travel 500 km without a stop, and that gets the electric equivalent of nearly 100 miles per gallon.

One of Motor Trend's consulting judges said that before he drove the Volt, he expected a science fair experiment. Instead he got a moon shot. He said: "this is a fully developed vehicle with seamlessly integrated systems and software, a real car that provides a unique driving experience."

In layman's terms, that means driving a GM Holden Volt gives you that rare experience of both living well and doing good – which is the goal for our auto industry. This American-Australian collaboration is designed to give you all the fun of driving a great car, and the pride of knowing that it is emissions-free.

Knowing the Mayor's commitment to both sustainability and style, I'm expecting she may be driving up to City Hall in one of these any day. No pressure Clover.

I'm thinking of doing it myself. As a gearhead – I think folks here call them "rev-heads" – what I especially love about this car is the smooth acceleration. The electric motor



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means there's no need for a gear exchange. You just step on the accelerator and there is no jerking or lurching, just pure speed like taking off down a runway in an airplane.

In fact, the only thing that's kept me from buying an electric vehicle before this has been what Mike mentioned – “range anxiety” or the fear that these cars could not go far enough without recharging. But Volt solved this problem.

In fact, the engineers have solved basically every anxiety about the electric vehicle and we should probably get them started on solving every other anxiety known to man. Now that they are done with this project, we're going to put them in charge of nuclear non-proliferation and eliminating male pattern baldness.

But in the interest of candor, let me tell you the one downside of this car. It is not for people who enjoy guilt. It violates the First Law of the Puritans: that is, the fear that someone somewhere is having fun . . . and not being punished for it. This is joy without sin. It is eating a chocolate sundae and losing weight. It is skipping work and getting a raise. It is watching the Kardashians and getting smarter.

But you don't need to take my word for it. In matters of driving pleasure and other forms of hedonism, I look to the great American rev-head, Jay Leno. Jay owns over 200 cars, including 11 Bentleys, 25 Corvettes, and 51 Supercars. And he's sold on electric cars. In fact, he is a member of the 10,000 Electric Mile club. That is, he's driven that many miles in his Volt on battery power alone.

So it is cool enough for Jay Leno, stylish and sustainable enough for Clover Moore, and it was designed by the same people who are going to cure baldness. Now that's a car.

So congratulations to Holden, congratulations to the planet, and congratulations to the Mayor on your decision to immediately go out and buy a new Volt.