



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cox Automotive Forecast: May New-Vehicle Sales to Cool After Tariff-Fueled Surge, 16M SAAR Expected

- May's new-vehicle sales pace is forecast to reach approximately 16.0 million, up slightly compared to last May's 15.8 million pace but down from April's strong 17.3 million level.
- The sales volume of new vehicles for May is projected to reach 1.50 million units, representing an increase of 3.2% compared to the same period last year and a rise of 2.5% from April.
- May is likely the last month to exhibit pull-ahead sales gains, and sales momentum is expected to slow further in the months ahead.

ATLANTA, May 27, 2025 – May new-vehicle sales, when reported early next week, are expected to show a slower sales level from March and April's tariff-inspired buying surge, according to the Cox Automotive forecast released today.

The May seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR), or sales pace, is forecasted by Cox Automotive to reach approximately 16.0 million, up slightly from last May's 15.8 million level. However, this represents a significant decline from March's 17.8 million and April's 17.3 million pace. Sales volume in May is expected to rise 3.2% from last year and 2.5% from last month. This month's gains, however, are overstated because May has one more selling day than last year or last month.

"The vehicle market has been particularly strong since new tariff announcements in March, as many vehicle shoppers who were considering buying this year decided to pull ahead their purchase, before higher prices hit the market," said [Charlie Chesbrough](#), senior economist at Cox Automotive. "However, much of that pull-ahead demand has now been satiated, so consumer demand is expected to fall this month."

According to Cox Automotive's [vAuto Live Market View](#), strong vehicle sales in March and April led to tighter inventory levels. New-vehicle inventory at the start of May totaled 2.49 million units on U.S. dealer lots, down 7.4% from the start of April and lower by 10.5% from a year ago. Days' supply was 66 at the beginning of May, down six days from the previous measure at the start of April.

"Available inventory on dealer lots has declined significantly over recent weeks," noted Chesbrough. "Finding the right vehicle will be more challenging for shoppers. Additionally, prices will be high as existing inventory becomes less available and more valuable due to tariffs on incoming replacement supply. As more tariffed products replace existing inventory over the summer, prices are expected to be pushed higher, leading to slower sales in the coming months."

These concerns are echoed in the [Q2 Cox Automotive Dealer Sentiment Index](#), released last week. The quarterly survey, conducted in late April and early May, revealed that dealers are increasingly wary of future market conditions. While many acknowledged the short-term lift in sales from tariff-driven urgency, the broader sentiment reflected anxiety about a cooling market and the long-term impact of trade policies. As expected, newly implemented tariffs by the Trump administration were a dominant theme in dealer responses, reinforcing the forecast of a cooling market in the months ahead.



May 2025 New-Vehicle Sales Forecast

Segment	Sales Forecast ¹					Market Share		
	May-25	May-24	Apr-25	YOY%	MOM%	May-25	Apr-25	MOM
Mid-Size Car	70,000	76,786	67,191	-8.8%	4.2%	4.7%	4.6%	0.1%
Compact Car	110,000	110,671	109,064	-0.6%	0.9%	7.3%	7.5%	-0.1%
Compact SUV/Crossover	255,000	244,294	249,639	4.4%	2.1%	17.0%	17.1%	-0.1%
Full-Size Pickup Truck	210,000	196,484	199,192	6.9%	5.4%	14.0%	13.6%	0.4%
Mid-Size SUV/Crossover	245,000	233,167	242,491	5.1%	1.0%	16.3%	16.6%	-0.2%
Other Segments	610,000	591,686	595,423	3.1%	2.4%	40.7%	40.7%	0.0%
Grand Total	1,500,000	1,453,088	1,463,000	3.2%	2.5%			

¹Cox Automotive Industry Insights data

About Cox Automotive

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