

Toyota's hybrid sales top 3 million units

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Toyota Prius hybrid model cars wait for customers at a Toyota dealer in Hollywood, California on March 10, 2010. Toyota Motor Corporation has said it had sold more than three million hybrid vehicles, a key pillar of its earnings, thanks to the global popularity of the Prius model.

Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) said Tuesday it had sold more than three million hybrid vehicles, a key pillar of its earnings, thanks to the global popularity of the Prius model.

Since the Coaster Hybrid EV and the original Prius hit the market in 1997, Toyota had sold 3.03 million hybrid vehicles worldwide by the end of February, the company said in a statement.

"With global cumulative sales of its hybrid vehicles passing the three-million mark, TMC believes that such vehicles are starting to enter the mainstream," it said.

Toyota currently sells 16 hybrid models in about 80 countries and regions around the world. The segment has become the main driver of the company's sales, with the Prius becoming Japan's most popular vehicle in recent years.

The world's biggest automaker brought the electric-petrol Prius to North America, Europe and other major markets in 2000 and it has effectively dominated the category of environmentally friendly vehicles ever since.

However, analysts expect it to face stiffer competition from rivals such as Nissan and Mitsubishi that have focused on all-electric vehicles.

Toyota's tally of hybrid vehicles reached two million in August 2009, soon after it released the third edition of the Prius in May 2009.

The company estimated that its hybrid vehicles have led to some 18 million fewer tons of [carbon dioxide emissions](#).

Toyota's reputation has been tarnished by millions of recalls including its Prius worldwide for various defects, some of which were linked with fatal accidents in the United States.

It said it planned to introduce 10 new hybrid models by the end of 2012.

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