

New Ram Dakota pickup a no-go, says boss

It appears there won't be a new Ram Dakota pickup, but not for the reason you might think.

Mid-size pickups are the current hot ticket. They should be, because they're awesome. Utility, drivability, and better fuel economy than any pickup truck could EVER dream of just a few short years ago? What's not to like? When GM killed off the Chevrolet Colorado, Ford killed the Ranger, and the Dodge Dakota also went the way of the dodo, America lost its small pickups. The Nissan Frontier soldiered on, but those haven't been updated in ages.

Now, though, we have a new Colorado (and GMC Canyon corporate twin), and it's selling like hotcakes. Call any Chevrolet dealership within a 50 mile radius of your location, and you'd be LUCKY to find a Colorado in stock for you to see and drive. They're everywhere on the streets, and for good reason - they're cheap, quality, and smaller than their full size counterparts, making them easier to drive.

However, it seems that Ram won't be following GM's lead and reviving the Dakota nameplate. There will be no Ram Dakota.. at least for now. Before you go off as the Internet hivemind and complain that FCA is ruining Ram and doesn't understand pickups or whatever other negativity you're likely stewing in your brains right now and preparing to unleash on your keyboard... hear them out.

Ram brand CEO Bob Hegbloom, when speaking with our friends over at *Automotive News* gave a pretty good explanation why there won't be a new Ram Dakota pickup, if you believe him. Hegbloom believes that the Ram 1500 is (not the Dodge Ram 1500 anymore, of course) is so efficient, at 29 MPG on the highway with the optional 3.0 turbodiesel V6, that a the Ram Dakota successor would need to get even more - as much as 35 MPG, to be a practical alternative.

It's worth noting, too, that the Colorado/Canyon gets an EPA-estimated 27 MPG highway, but right now they can only be ordered with a 3.6 liter V6. Next year, a 2.8 liter Duramax diesel will be joining the lineup, which should offer impressive fuel economy (and also 369 lb-ft. of torque, which is where the real fun will be).

What do you think? Is Hegbloom right? Is a Ram Dakota successor an unattainable goal?

I say he's crazy. A Ram Dakota successor would sell like hotcakes, and could very easily be engineered with some parts already in the FCA stable that are here now or coming soon. Take the 2017 Jeep Wrangler's lightweight steel and aluminum platform, add a bed, give us the 2.4 Tiger Shark with a better cam for low-end torque as a base engine, the Pentastar V6, and the 3.0 EcoDiesel from the Ram 1500 and you'd get there in a hurry. Presto, a Ram Dakota successor with more economy (or similar) to the GM twins, and a deluge of buyers upon their showroom.

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Come on, Ram. You know you want to. [/caption]

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