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10 Reasons Why Fisker May Be Worse Than Solyndra

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Automotive

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<http://automotivediscovery.com/releasing-fisker-karma-ver-the-market-even-if-its-not-yet-ready-to-be-launched-9212281/>) and [green technology advocacy](http://www.hybridcars.com/news/were-fisker-karmas-aunched-too-quickly-42621.html) (<http://www.hybridcars.com/news/were-fisker-karmas-aunched-too-quickly-42621.html>) Web sites are [buzz](http://www.torquenews.com/1075/did-fisker-deliver-karma-it-was-ready-doe-loan) (<http://www.torquenews.com/1075/did-fisker-deliver-karma-it-was-ready-doe-loan>) with a story about a former employee of [Fisker Automotive](#)



<http://nlpc.org/category/keywords/fisker>) who claims the company released its \$102,000-plus Karma electric sport sedan prematurely, in order to meet targets set forth by the [Department of Energy](#) (<http://nlpc.org/category/keywords/department-energy>) so Fisker could access funds from a \$529 million loan award.

This followed reports from all over the Internet that *Consumer Reports* purchased a Karma in Connecticut for \$107,850, only to [see it totally disabled](http://news.consumerreports.org/cars/2012/03/video-bad-karma-our-fisker-karma-plug-in-hybrid-breaks-down.html) (<http://news.consumerreports.org/cars/2012/03/video-bad-karma-our-fisker-karma-plug-in-hybrid-breaks-down.html>) before the magazine could run it through its tests.

The whistleblower story [originated](http://gigaom.com/cleantech/fisker-electric-karma-was-pushed-to-market-before-it-was-ready/) (<http://gigaom.com/cleantech/fisker-electric-karma-was-pushed-to-market-before-it-was-ready/>) on the pro-Clean tech Web site [Gigaom.com](#), and was written by electric vehicle cheerleader [Katie Fehrenbacher](http://gigaom.com/author/katiefehren/) (<http://gigaom.com/author/katiefehren/>). According to her report, "The former Fisker employee said that it wasn't uncommon for the first Karma cars to have technical issues, and said that was one reason for leaving Fisker — the employee now works at electric car company Coda." Fisker has drawn \$193 million on the DOE loan, with the last reimbursement in May 2011, but can no longer access those funds because of its failure to attain other milestones under the loan agreement.

No one has speculated publicly who the whistleblower might be, so I will. A likely suspect is Coda's senior vice president of engineering, Thomas Fritz. According to [his bio](http://www.codaautomotive.com/leadership-management/) (<http://www.codaautomotive.com/leadership-management/>), Fritz headed Fisker's engineering department for more than three years, and before that had 23 years automotive engineering experience that included Ford, BMW and Rolls Royce. So if anybody is in the position to say authoritatively that the Karma was released before it was ready, it's Fritz.

The timing makes sense too. Fritz [left Fisker in March last year](http://www.autoobserver.com/2011/06/coda-snags-fisker-engineering-chief.html) (<http://www.autoobserver.com/2011/06/coda-snags-fisker-engineering-chief.html>), the same month [the Karma was put into production](http://www.autoobserver.com/2011/03/fisker-begins-karma-production.html) (<http://www.autoobserver.com/2011/03/fisker-begins-karma-production.html>). He landed at Coda in June, only [a month after Fisker received its last payment](http://content.usatoday.com/communities/driveon/post/2012/02/fisker-halt-layoffs-delaware-gm-government-loan-missed-deadline-1) (<http://content.usatoday.com/communities/driveon/post/2012/02/fisker-halt-layoffs-delaware-gm-government-loan-missed-deadline-1>) from the DOE loan. Besides the need to meet DOE expectations, Fisker may have responded to market pressures as well.

