

In 1994, General Motors acquired a controlling interest in [Ovonics](#)'s battery development and manufacturing to drive the EV1 plug-in electric car.

On October 10, 2001, [Texaco](#) purchased GM's share in GM Ovonic, and Chevron completed its acquisition of Texaco six days later.

In 2003, Texaco Ovonic Battery Systems was restructured into [Cobasys](#), a 50/50 joint venture between Chevron and [Energy Conversion Devices \(ECD\) Ovonic](#). Chevron's influence over Cobasys extends beyond a strict 50/50 joint venture. Chevron holds a 19.99% interest in ECD Ovonic. In addition, Chevron maintains the right to seize all of Cobasys' intellectual property rights in the event that ECD Ovonic does not fulfill its contractual obligations.

On September 10, 2007, Chevron filed a legal claim that ECD Ovonic has not fulfilled its obligations. ECD Ovonic disputes this claim. Since that time, the arbitration hearing was repeatedly suspended while the parties negotiate with an unknown prospective buyer. No agreement has been reached with the potential buyer. Cobasys's patents relating to NiMH batteries expire in 2015.

In her book, [Plug-in Hybrids: The Cars that Will Recharge America](#), published in February 2007, [Sherry Boschert](#) argues that large-format NiMH batteries are commercially viable but that Cobasys refuses to sell or license them to small companies or individuals.

Boschert reveals that Cobasys accepts only very large orders for these batteries. When Boschert conducted her research, major auto makers showed little interest in large orders for large-format NiMH batteries.

However, Toyota employees complained about the difficulty in getting smaller orders of large format NiMH batteries to service the existing 825 RAV-4EVs.

Since no other companies were willing to make large orders, Cobasys was not manufacturing nor licensing any large format NiMH battery technology for automotive purposes.

Boschert concludes that "it's possible that Cobasys (Chevron) is squelching all access to large NiMH batteries through its control of patent licenses in order to remove a competitor to gasoline.

However, recently-signed Cobasys contracts demonstrate that the company is willing to use its NiMH technology in the automotive industry, specifically for use with [hybrid electric vehicles](#) only. Cobasys specifically forbids any automobile manufacturer to add an electric plug-in to any of their NiMH Battery hybrid electric vehicles.

In December 2006, Cobasys and [General Motors](#) announced that they had signed a contract under which Cobasys provides NiMH batteries for the [Saturn Aura hybrid sedan](#).

In March 2007, GM announced that it would use Cobasys NiMH batteries in the 2008 [Chevrolet Malibu hybrid](#) as well. Cobasys' insistent "Big Picture" focus on large companies and purchases has not been popular with some small companies and lone individuals who want to buy directly from them.

Chevron Oil Company is trying to squelch all access to large NiMH batteries through its control of patent licenses in order to avoid using these large NiMH batteries in the electric plug-in cars which would eliminate the need for gasoline all together.