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Tens of thousands' of jobs at risk, Jaguar Land Rover boss tells PM

Ralf Speth says he cannot be sure any UK plants will continue to operate after Brexit.

Jaguar Land Rover's chief executive said under current estimates a hard Brexit would cost the firm £1.2bn a year.

- 5 Britain's biggest car manufacturer, Jaguar Land Rover, has launched a blistering attack on Theresa May's handling of Brexit as leading Eurosceptics claim there is "nothing to fear" about crashing out of the EU without a deal.

- 10 Ralf Speth, the chief executive, told the prime minister that the company's factories faced grinding to a halt and "tens of thousands" of jobs in the sector could be lost if she failed to reach an agreement with Brussels.

In a surprise intervention at a landmark car industry summit organised by the government, he described the prospect of a cliff-edge break with the EU as "horrificing", warning that if wrong decisions were taken now it could result in the "worst of times" for the UK.

- 15 He stressed the company was "firmly committed" to the UK but warned that a hard Brexit would cost it £1.2bn a year, wiping out profits. "What decisions will we be forced to make if Brexit means not merely that costs go up, but that we cannot physically build cars on time and on budget in the UK?"

- 20 It follows similar warnings from other industry chiefs, including Airbus and BMW, about the potentially damaging consequences of Britain's decision to leave the EU.

May, who was waiting backstage as Speth delivered his speech, did not mention Brexit in her own address to the Birmingham summit immediately after his.

By Pippa Crerar, adapted from *The Guardian*, September 11th, 2018