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2004 DEC 14
Massillon, Ohio

November 14, 2004

NHTSA
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 Seventh Street
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear People,

This letter concerns two faulty seatbelts in a 1999 Ford Taurus station wagon, which I purchased new in January 1999. (The serial number is 1FAFP58S0XA [redacted])

It was just last month that I wrote to you that one of the rear seat seatbelts quit working for no apparent reason. Now the other rear seatbelt quit working also. This seems to be more than just a coincidence. The first seat belt quite working with the car having less than 50,000 miles on it. This is the one I wrote to you about before. Now the one on the other side (the passenger side) has the same problem. It simply will not retract. The car has only 55,000 miles on it now.

It is strange that these two rear seatbelts (which have seen little use) have seized up, when the front ones, which have seen great usage, are fine.

I would think there is a fault here with the seatbelts. Especially since the Ford dealer I bought the first one from told me about other people with the same problem. In any case, since Ford doesn't care about this problem, I am now off to buy another seatbelt.

Something, I believe, is wrong with the design of these seatbelts. I have never in my life had a seatbelt go bad, let alone two of them on the same car. And I drive my cars for 150,000+ miles.

By the way, I think I know what the problem is. These seatbelts will not work until they are bolted in place. This puts a "flex" on the housing, which releases a catch and allows the seatbelt to extend. I believe that with time, the metal relaxes, the "flex" which puts the tension on the housing no longer is in effect, and therefore, the seatbelt quits working. Being an engineer who has personally designed equipment costing over \$100,000 and also a teacher at a local college, I believe I have some knowledge of simple equipment such as this (then again, I might also be wrong concerning the problem in this case).

Sincerely, [redacted]

One More