



U.S. Department
of Transportation
National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

Administrator

400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

MAR 4 2005

The Honorable Elizabeth Dole
United States Senator
310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 122
Raleigh, NC 27601

NVS-216 jls
Ref. # 10109124

Dear Senator Dole:

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 13, 2005, on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] wrote concerning a problem he and his wife encountered with their model year (MY) 2003 Chevrolet Suburban vehicle. Your correspondence was received on January 27, 2005.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is aware of the General Motors Corporation's (GM) Technical Service Bulletin (TSB) (Article No. 00-02-35-003F, copy enclosed) concerning the replacement of the upper intermediate steering shaft assembly in certain MY 1999 through 2003 GM vehicles, which include certain MY 2003 Chevrolet Suburban vehicles. However, the issuance of a TSB does not necessarily reflect the existence of a safety-related defect in accordance with the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act. Neither GM nor NHTSA has determined that the vehicles in question contain such a defect. Therefore, NHTSA cannot require the manufacturer to notify vehicle owners of the issuance of a TSB or perform the corrective action described in the TSB on Mr. Brewer's vehicle at no cost to him.

On January 20, 2005, GM notified NHTSA that it would conduct a safety recall (NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-018) to remedy a defect found to exist with the bolt that attaches the intermediate steering shaft to the steering gear in certain MY 2005 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra vehicles, which could potentially result in the loss of steering control. For your information, we have enclosed a copy of GM's letter and a summary of Recall No. 05V-018.

Following receipt of your letter, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) performed a thorough review of its complaints database in an effort to identify whether a safety defect trend exists with regard to the steering system, specifically the intermediate steering shaft, in MY 1999 through 2004 GM vehicles, which include the Silverado, Sierra, Tahoe, Suburban, Envoy, Yukon, Escalade, Avalanche, and H2 models. Additionally, based on your constituent's report, we assessed whether the scope of GM's safety recall should be expanded to include earlier MYs. Based on the information currently available to us, it appears that the scope of

GM's recall is adequate and that there is insufficient evidence to warrant opening a safety defect investigation. The information you provided on behalf of Mr. Brewer and the report he recently submitted have been entered into our database. ODI will continue to monitor reports associated with the steering system in these vehicles and take future action as appropriate.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Ronald L. Medford, Senior Associate Administrator for Vehicle Safety, at (202) 366-1810.

Sincerely yours,



Jeffrey W. Runge, M.D.

Enclosures

cc: Washington Office