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January 3, 2005

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defect Investigations
NSA-10.01, 400 7th St, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Sir/Madam:

Enclosed is a history of our new 2005 Toyota Prius, which was purchased NEW on October 9, 2004. There is obviously a defect with this car regarding filling the tank with gasoline. The dealers obviously don't know what to do about it, so they make us feel like we're making up the whole problem.

We just wanted to file this official complaint with your office, in case there are other consumers out there experiencing the same problem.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

Margaret
1/24/05

History of Our 2005 Toyota Prius
Updated - 12-29-04

October 9, 2004 — Purchased new Toyota Prius from Toyota of Danville, Danville, IL.

Oct 9-Nov 28, 2004 — We were enjoying driving the new Prius and the good mileage we were getting.

November 29, 2004 — Stopped at gas station on Cunningham Ave, Urbana, IL to fill up Prius, even though gas gauge showed only half empty. Pump shut off after only taking 1.1 gals. Thought something was wrong with pump, so moved to another gas pump at the same gas station. Only took 28 cents worth of gas. Figured we obviously had a problem with new car after driving it only 49 days. Drove approximately another 4 miles on way home and decided to stop at one more gas station to try to fill car up with gas. This time I played around with gas pump hose and finally got it to take some gas (or so I thought). When the pump clicked off I pulled the hose out and gas shot out of fuel line on me and the ground. The gas gauge inside the car still showed half full. Now we were convinced we had a real problem.

November 30, 2004 — Took the car back to Toyota of Danville Service Department. Waited while they checked it out. Service manager told us we needed a new fuel cutoff valve and it would be about two (2) weeks before they could get the part. However, he told us we could go ahead and drive the car and that he was 99% sure that the gas gauge would work, so we would know when to stop driving it before we ran out of gas. We drove the car many miles the next day and noticed the gas gauge was not moving, so took it back to dealer, since it was dangerous to drive vehicle--not knowing how much gas we had & knowing we could not even get any gas in the car and left it at the dealer.

December 1, 2004 —The Service Manager called and said the car is fixed and ready for us to pick up. I asked him how he got the part so fast, when he said there would be a two (2) week wait. He said, "It just showed up!" His diagnosis--water had gotten in fuel cut off valve and caused the vehicle to not accept fuel. He was not sure how water got in valve. We picked the car up today.

December 22, 2004 — The gas gauge was almost half empty and since we don't have any confidence in being able to get gas in this car and the fact we were experiencing subzero temperatures, we decided to fill the car with gas. The fuel pump hose clicked off immediately. This time we took it to O'Brien's Toyota Service Department in Urbana, IL since it is much closer and the fact that Toyota of Danville had obviously not fixed the car. They told us they couldn't look at it until Monday, December 27 since we didn't have an appointment. The reason we didn't make an appointment was the Service Manager in Danville told us when we have this problem, we should bring the car in immediately for service.

December 27, 2004 -- O'Brien's called and said they couldn't find anything wrong with the gas filler area and drove to gas station and put 3-4 gallons of gas in car. They said we had to jam the gas pump hose in really far (which I tried when we first experienced this problem--and it still did not allow me to fill with gas at that time, and I almost was unable to get the hose out). We picked the car up today.

December 28, 2004 -- After picking the car up yesterday we decided to drive it out of town and we managed to use up four-tenths of the gas tank. Because we can't figure out why they can get gas in the car at the station near their dealership, we decided to videotape our experience of trying to put gas in the Prius. Sure enough it did not work at the Wal Mart gas station near us. So, we decided to drive up the road to Total gas station. The same thing happened--the pump clicks off immediately and each time we try it, it just keeps clicking off as though it is full of gas, when the gauge is showing near half empty.

We immediately drove the car over to O'Brien's Toyota in Urbana. By now we are really getting quite upset with this car and the whole ordeal. When we arrived, we were sent to the Service Manager, John Satterthwaite. The staff are located right near the area where they are working on cars and the noise level was unbearable at the time. Consequently, we literally had to yell at Mr. Satterthwaite in order for him to hear what we were saying. At one point, he wanted to know why we were mad at him. We told him we were not mad at him, but really upset with the car situation. He had his wife, Melissa, who apparently works in the sales area, to come over to the service department and she was going to accompany us to the gas station to see why we couldn't get gas in the car. Well, in the meantime Mr. Satterthwaite became upset with something my husband said and they began to argue. After this, they demanded we leave and take the car over to Danville Toyota dealer where we purchased the car. I was under the impression that part of a Service Manager's job is to try to go out of his way to help calm down someone that is upset, not purposely try to antagonize him more!

To back up a week and half prior to this incident, I had called up O'Brien's to make an appointment to have the oil changed in the Prius, and I was also asking them if they could check the car over because we have been getting much worse gas mileage since the Danville dealer initially worked on the car. After I gave her a short synopsis of the car, she pointedly said we should probably take it back to Danville since they knew the history of the car. I said, why would I want to do that because I had lost confidence in them. I feel that the Service Manager deliberately started an argument with my husband, since he knew we were already upset, as an excuse to send us back to Danville. I have felt all along they don't really want to deal with this car since we did not purchase it from them. I think Toyota Headquarters needs to be aware of this fact.

After we left the Service Department we immediately went over to the main office to talk to a manager. We spoke to one gentlemen who quickly referred us to Trinity, we assumed she was a PR person. Well, she agreed to accompany us to the gas station. However, she refused to go back to the station that we had just come from and

had had no luck getting gas to go into the car. We ended up just going down the street to the station where they had put gas into the car the day before. Her excuse was that if it accepts gas at one station, it will accept gas at any station. I don't think this is being fair to us the consumer at all. They make us feel like we are lying about this whole situation--like we have nothing better to do than run over to their dealership every time we need gas. When we got home this evening, we viewed the videotape and it clearly shows how the car would not allow us to put gas into it. We hope some day to show this to a Toyota Customer Service Representative.

December 29, 2004 -- We have now become very, very discouraged with our **NEW \$22,000 2005 Toyota Prius**. We cannot trust this car anymore. We cannot take a long trip in it because we never know if we can get gas in it. Our confidence is completely shattered. We don't enjoy driving the car anymore because all we do is watch the gas gauge!!! Now we cannot even have the comfort of being able to take it to O'Brien's for this problem or heaven forbid any other problem that may arise. We have driven Toyota products for over 20 years and this is the first time we have ever been this dissatisfied with one. This is just not **FAIR!!** Toyota Corporation should refund our money if they cannot fix something 100%!!!

December 29, 2004--Ironically, someone called today to take a survey that they recorded re. our recent experience with O'Brien's Service Department. I hope this tape is forwarded to Toyota Headquarters in California. Someone needs to know what is going on at O'Brien's in Urbana, Illinois.