



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

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

APR 28 2005

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
United States Senator
60 West Street, Suite 202
Annapolis, MD 21401-2448

NVS-216 mjj
Ref. No. 10118968

Dear Senator Mikulski:

Thank you for your correspondence dated March 14, 2005, on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED] wrote concerning a problem he encountered with his model year (MY) 1997 Ford Expedition vehicle. Your correspondence was received on April 19, 2005.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is the Federal agency responsible for improving safety on our Nation's highways. We are authorized to order manufacturers to recall and repair vehicles or items of motor vehicle equipment when our investigations indicate that they contain serious safety defects in their design, construction, or performance. We also monitor the adequacy of manufacturers' recall campaigns. In order for the agency to initiate an investigation, we look carefully at the body of consumer complaints and other available data to determine whether a defect may exist. We cannot act on isolated problems or resolve disputes between individual owners, dealers, or manufacturers.

We appreciate the report you provided on behalf of [REDACTED] and the previous report he filed with the U.S. Department of Transportation's Auto Safety Hotline on February 16, 2005. Reports from motorists are a very important source of information for us. Each report is analyzed and entered into a database to help us determine whether an investigation into a possible safety defect is warranted.

On November 19, 2004, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation (ODI) opened a safety defect investigation (PB04-078) into 36 reports alleging the occurrence of an engine compartment fire in MY 2000 Ford F-150, Ford Expedition, and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, all of which indicated the vehicle was parked with the ignition turned to the off position. On January 27, 2005, the Ford Motor Company (Ford) notified NHTSA that it would conduct a safety recall (NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-017) to remedy a defect determined to exist with the speed control deactivation switch in certain MY 2000 and 2001 Ford F-150, Ford Expedition,



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888-DASH-2-DOT
888-327-4236

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and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, which could result in an engine compartment fire. On March 22, 2005, ODI upgraded PE04-078 to an engineering analysis (EA05-005) and redefined the scope of the investigation to include certain MY 1993 through 2002 Ford F-150 and MY 1997 through 2002 Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator vehicles, minus those vehicles subject to Ford's safety recall. An engineering analysis is a more detailed and complete technical analysis of the character and scope of an alleged defect. The engineering analysis has been opened to determine whether other Ford vehicles equipped with a similar speed control deactivation switch should have been included in the safety recall. Results of our investigation will be made public upon its completion.

For your information, we have enclosed a copy of the opening resume for PE04-078, Ford's letter dated January 27, 2005, the summary of NHTSA Campaign No. 05V-017, the closing resume for PE04-078, and the opening resume for EA05-005.

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

Sincerely yours,



Michael W. Harrington
Director of External Affairs

Enclosures

cc: Washington Office

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Original Signed By

Michael W. Harrington
Director of External Affairs

Enclosures

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