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"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do." -Henry Ford

April 20, 2005

Dear US Department of Transportation,

This is a copy of the second letter I have written to Ford customer service. I am sending you a copy as well.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
VIN 2FMZA6147 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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5/2/05

[REDACTED]
Johnson City, TN [REDACTED]

Dear Ford Customer Service Representative,

Our Ford Windstar almost killed my children, another family member, and myself last week.

I have been extremely disappointed with Ford for these reasons:

1. There is a serious brake problem and no one knows what is wrong.
2. Ford customer service has not stood behind their product.
3. I feel we have been stuck with a Ford Lemon.

The serious brake problem. Since around 60,000 mi. this Windstar has not had great functioning brakes. The antilock brake system did not know when it was supposed to come on and would activate about 80% of the time. There was also another brake problem though. It happened 1% or less of the time. The van was taken into a certified Ford garage to be looked at. The van was said to be perfectly safe. The antilock brakes could be disconnected if that was annoying. The van was taken in a few times more for this brake problem. After paying fees for this service the brakes were diagnosed as safe. In December 2004 the antilock brakes stopped functioning and we were told we needed new sensors. We were actually glad they stopped working, the ride has been a lot quieter. Now though I feel the serious brake problem happens a little more frequently. My sister-in-law has needed to borrow the van lately and she also noticed this brake flaw and asked about it. I took the van in after our dangerous incident and asked an independent garage to look it over. Their suggestion was a master cylinder, but they could not guarantee this is the problem, they did not know what was wrong.

Ford Customer service. I contacted Ford about this brake problem around 80,000 mi. I talked to a representative who showed concern over the phone about the brake problem and said he would turn it over to another department. We are now at 100,000 mi. and no one has ever contacted us again about it. This representative also asked if I wanted a confirmation letter. I said yes, but never did receive one.

The Ford Lemon. Yes this vehicle has been a large lemon. Not only were the antilock brakes an annoyance and the brake problem no one seems to know how to fix there has also been transmission problems. The transmission problems started also around 60,000mi. We have changed the transmission fluid twice and added an additive both times. This has helped tremendously and we are able to limp along with very little complaints from the transmission. Since having problems with this Ford vehicle I have noticed and talked with other Ford owners and heard their complaints. Some were the same as mine.

We are considered the working class of America. We barely make enough to make ends meet and try to make smart financial decisions. We were seriously thinking we could drive this vehicle until 150,000 mi. We are not in a position to purchase a different vehicle right now and this is our only family vehicle we own. I am sending this letter as proof to a variety of sources including The US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. If the brakes choose to malfunction at a time when my husband or I cannot avoid an accident and it is found the brakes were malfunctioning, we have proof that we were trying to find out the problem and we were trying to contact Ford.

The images of the almost accident haunt me. We were driving slowly on a winding road down the hill. The next corner was a 180-degree turn with a guardrail between the road and the edge of a cliff. Thank goodness for the small grass embankment, and thank goodness I had enough sense to drive on it at the right time to help me stop or we would have gone right off the side of the cliff. When I gained enough courage to travel the rest of the way home, the brakes worked fine with no other problems.

Sincerely,