

10124771

May 7, 2005

05/07/05 10:43

NHTSA
US Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Auto Safety Department,

This letter is regarding my 2003 Buick LeSabre. I believe there may be a problem that affects the safety of people driving these cars. I do not have the ability to research and confirm this. But here is my story.

My car was purchased from Enterprise Car Sales in September of 2004. This is the third car we have purchased from them. The cars they sell have been rental cars and they certify that they check the cars thoroughly before selling them.

In February of this year the LeSabre began making groaning noises under the front of the car. I ask my husband to listen and see if he could tell what was wrong. He was not sure. The groaning became a knocking and then sounded like something was going to fall apart under the front of the car. This happened as I was driving the car. We called Enterprise and they had us tow the car to Bob Moore Autoplex (a Buick dealership) because it would be a warranty issue. At the dealership it was found that a bolt was loose on the left front brake caliper bracket. They replaced the bolt. I ask the service advisor (Veronica) if they checked everything under the front end to be sure my car was safe. She said yes they did and the car was safe to drive. I accepted her answer. The LeSabre still made a slight groaning under the front end, but we decided to accept the dealerships word that everything was OK.

On May 1, 2005 I was driving home on the highway and all of a sudden the worst noise ever came from under the front of my car. I did not know what was happening. Maybe a blowout! I pulled over to the side of the road and looked. The tires looked OK. I was only a mile from home, so my husband said to bring it on home. Upon looking under the front end he found that a right front bolt was missing allowing some brake part to swing down and hit the wheel as I drove. Because this was Sunday and the LeSabre is my only transportation to work, he went to a parts house, got a bolt and put it on.

On Monday I called Veronica and told her what happened. I ask if they checked under the front end of the car in February shouldn't this have been found then? She said they are human, and that perhaps it was a brake job gone bad. She also stated that even though this was not a warranty problem, they would take care of me anyway. Because I had to have transportation to and from work I had to wait till my day off (Friday) to take the car in.

In the meantime I did find out these bolts are not touched during a brake job. They are bolts that once put on in the factory are usually not touched again. I was also told that this is a problem that happens with this model Buick.

When I took the car in on May 6, 2005 I ask the service advisor (Roger) that everything under the front end be checked thoroughly so that I could be reassured that the car is safe to drive. I told him about the continued groaning and could that be checked also. The result was that the missing bolt was the

*Car man
6/3/05*

same as the previous one, just on the other side. I again ask how this could have been missed when it was checked in February. He said he did not know about that, but that everything was checked now and my car was safe. I ask about the groaning noise and he stated that they did not find anything. If a problem shows up I could bring it back.

So, would you believe him that the car is safe? I was told that before and it was not true. In my opinion they flat out lied. And I don't feel safe in my car. If this is a known problem, why was the car sold to me without it being fixed? If this is a known problem, why were both sides not fixed in February? What about the continued groaning? Is it related? What caused the bolt to come loose and fall off? Are there other problems that are known but not taken care of until it causes a problem?

What can I do about this? I don't feel I can do anything. I bought the car from Enterprise Car Sales. Will they admit the car was not properly checked out? Do they even know that this is a problem on this model of Buick? Even if they do, what can they do to help me feel safe? Will I trust them again? I don't know.

I took the car to a Buick dealership. It appears they fix only what is wrong at that time - no more. In my opinion they lied about checking out the car and its safety. They don't share enough information to give you confidence in what they say. But, I did not buy the car from them. There is no one there with a vested interest in my problem. Will I trust them again? Not likely.

The car is financed and since owning it such a short time, it would be impossible to trade it in and get even close to the amount owed on it. And I would not want someone else to have the safety issues I have. I have 35,000 miles on this car. At 36,000 it will be out of warranty. That too is scary.

So there are only two things I can do. First, say my prayers everyday to not have any car problems. Second, to try and keep it from happening to someone else. Please try to see if there is a problem from the factory. And if there is, that the problem gets addressed with each car before it causes accidents or the loss of that safe, secure feeling we all like to have as we drive our cars. You know, even if the bolt does not cause an accident directly, if a person does not react correctly in that moment of crisis, it can still be the cause of the accident. The potential is there for life endangerment.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Oklahoma City, OK
[REDACTED]

cc: Enterprise Car Sales
Bob Moore Autoplex
Buick Customer Assistance Center